Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement
July/August 2008 • $4.50

JAPA RETREAT

Reconnecting with the Holy Name

- HOW TO LOVE EVERYONE
- JAPA AND THE OPENING HEART
- THE SCIENCE OF KNOWING GOD

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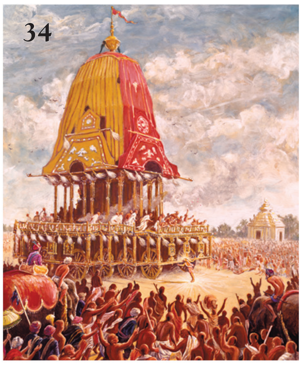
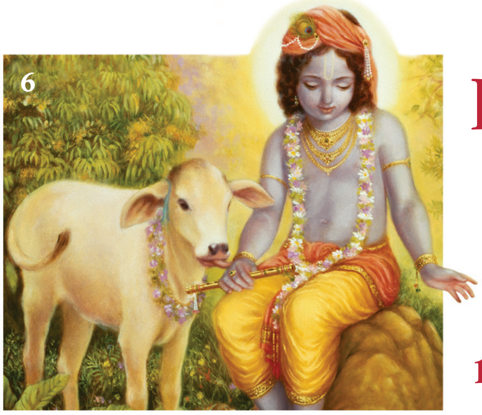
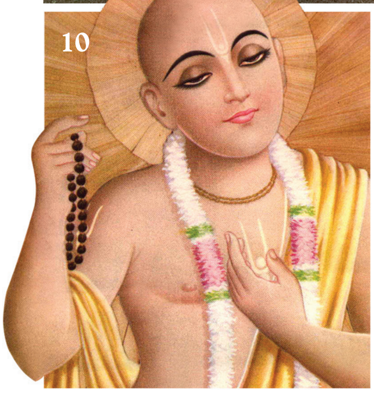
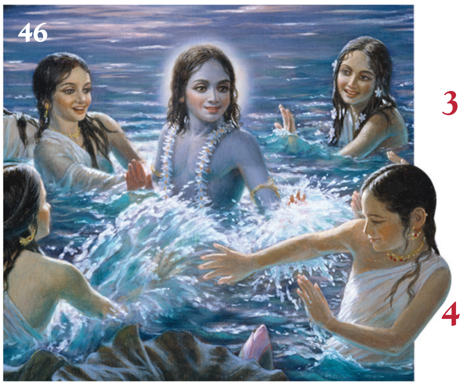
Back to Godh

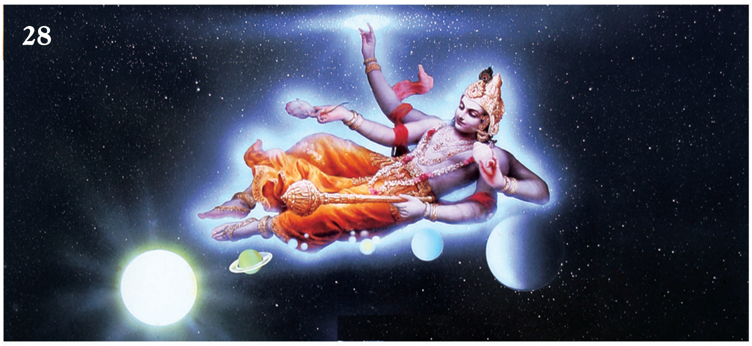
Founded 1944 • Vol. 42, No. 4 • July / August 2008











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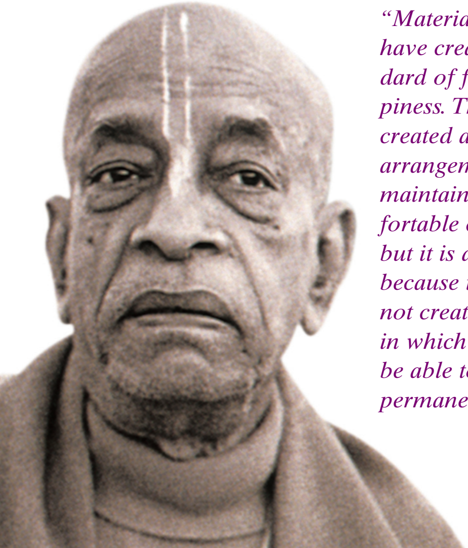
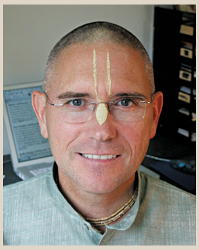
COVER Anapayini (left) and Jaya Radhe, both of Alachua, Florida, were among the attendees at a *japa* retreat held at Delphi University in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Please see the article beginning on page 16. (Photo by Radhanath Jakupko.)



"Materialistic men have created a standard of false happiness. They have created a gorgeous arrangement for maintaining a comfortable civilization, but it is all false because they cannot create a situation in which they will be able to enjoy it permanently."
—p. 56

WELCOME



TWO ARTICLES in this issue deal with the topic of *japa,* or the devotee's individual chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra while counting on beads. Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa's "Japa and the Opening Heart" analyses Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* ("Eight Prayers") to gain insight into this essential spiritual practice. In "Japa Retreat: The Perfect Cure for Self-Neglect," Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī reports on a *japa* workshop held in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Georgia.

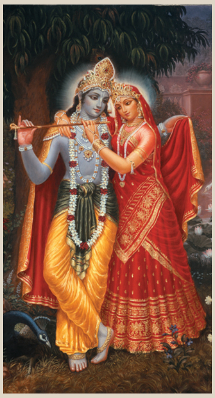
Contemplative chanting of God's names may seem alien to what goes on in scientific laboratories, but Navin Jani shows in "The Science of Knowing God" that the practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which include *japa,* can legitimately be called science. Through this expanded science, the spiritual scientist can perceive higher truths, including God Himself. Progress in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness leads to pure vision, or as Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī explains, "Eyes to See God."

To pursue the spiritual path to knowledge requires dedication rooted in the individual's freedom to make his or her own choices. In "The Choice," Madhava Smullen tells of growing up in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and realizing that the decision to pursue the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is one he alone can make for himself.

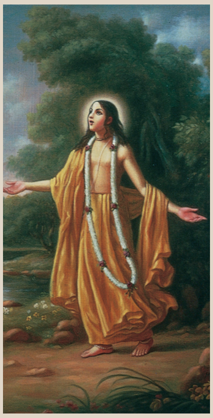
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO GODHEAD
The Magazine of the
Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

Inspired to Chant Again

I read the article about the Moscow temple in the March/April edition. All the articles regarding the temple and the hardship faced by devotees inspired me. The article "A Taste of Salted Bread" was very moving. I was so amazed that there is such dedication and faith. The devotees were ready to give up their life for Kṛṣṇa, and under extreme difficulties they still chanted and kept their vows up. Whoever said that pure devotees cannot be found in this age? I believe that the devotees were tested to the extreme, and they came out winning like Prahlāda Mahārāja and defeated the *asuras.*

I would like to sincerely thank them for such faith. Although I have been reading His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's books for years, I have not been fully committed. I found chanting tedious, so I never did any rounds. After reading the articles on Moscow, I have been inspired, and I shall be doing at least four rounds every day. I hope Kṛṣṇa will help me chant sincerely.

Bharti Ramji
Via the Internet

Transformed By Krishna.com

I am twenty-one years old, from Calcutta. I'm writing to say that members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society are and have been doing a great job. I want to thank you all. It's only due to the great effort of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society that I have been able to understand Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu) and become His staunch devotee.

I was not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa or any other god, in spite of being born in a Hindu family. But things changed gradually. One day I somehow entered Krishna.com to collect some pictures (wallpapers). I cannot explain what happened to me. I felt so attracted to Kṛṣṇa. I regularly visited the site, and gradually I became extremely attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I had been very abusive and short tempered. I loved to party, think about girls my age constantly, and go to bad movies every day. Now I've given up all these habits and have become a vegetarian. I always have the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa in my mouth, and I cannot explain the energy and ecstasy I get while chanting His name.

I wrote this message simply to convey my thanks to you all and to state how important it is for all of us to be inclined to Kṛṣṇa consciousness so as to easily get rid of all impurities that thrive in our soul. Our main goal should be Kṛṣṇa, who alone has the power to deliver us from all sorts of sinful action so that we get back to Him and become free from the entanglement of the material world.

Vivek Kumar
Kolkata, India

The Illusion Of Material Life

Is this material world, and material bodies, like a dream world to make the soul forget God?

Ashok Sahu
Via the Internet

Our reply: Souls come to this world to enjoy independently of God. Because it is impossible to do so, Kṛṣṇa has designed this world in such a way that the souls here can imagine they are enjoying in so many ways independently of God. When they become frustrated in their attempts, Kṛṣṇa sends a guru to reveal the true situation and explain how to become free from the illusion.

Our bodies of matter have nothing to do with our spiritual selves, and the pleasure of sense enjoyment is no more a reality than our dreams at night. By following the guru's good advice, souls become reunited with God through acts of devotion, which can be performed even in this world. One who perfects such God consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, attains an eternal spiritual form at the end of this life to serve the Lord in an intimate relationship forever.

Seeking Clarity and Grace

Is there any literature you can send me regarding beginning to learn about Kṛṣṇa? I had some *japa* beads, but they burned in our house fire last fall. I am just searching and trying to find "the truth," which has always seemed to escape me. I have read some of the *Bhagavad-gītā* as well. Perhaps I have been looking in the wrong places, but I am looking for that moment when it all comes to me and I have that moment of clarity and grace. Is there such a thing out there?

Christopher Groce
Via the Internet

Our reply: Please keep up this enthusiasm, and Kṛṣṇa will take leaps toward you. He is very eager to bring you back to Him. Our little endeavors go down in our transcendental bank account, so don't stop making deposits.

You can get more beads, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* is packed full with a lifetime of study. It would be great for you to connect with one of our temples and with devotees in your area. Association with devotees and chanting the holy names are powerful tools to wash away doubts and inspire our cultivation of this highest knowledge.

We have a treasure box full of books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you tell us more about your inclinations regarding spiritual life, we can recommend specific books. We also offer seminars, and online training is becoming available.

When we become saturated in spiritual sound and tangible service to God, we experience the taste of an exalted pleasure not attached to the material world. We will never experience the highest taste until we contact the divine. That is what the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is about. It is yoga, or linking to the supreme. By chanting, we daily have new realizations about who we really are and what we should be and can be doing eternally. This lifetime is very short, so we need to develop these practices right away. We have been absorbed in the illusory energy too many lifetimes. Now we should dedicate this lifetime to reach the Supreme, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Japa Struggles

Whenever I start chanting *japa,* I am surrounded by personal problems regarding my work and finances. Can you help me?

Dinesh Kapur

Our reply: Japa is the process of cleansing—cleaning house, stirring up the dirt that has been there for lifetimes of attachments. So don't be surprised if you see unwanted things. Now is the time to rid our hearts of the things that keep us from further devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Japa is very powerful, especially when chanted without offense. It is important to have firm faith that chanting will deliver you from the

(*please turn to page 54*)

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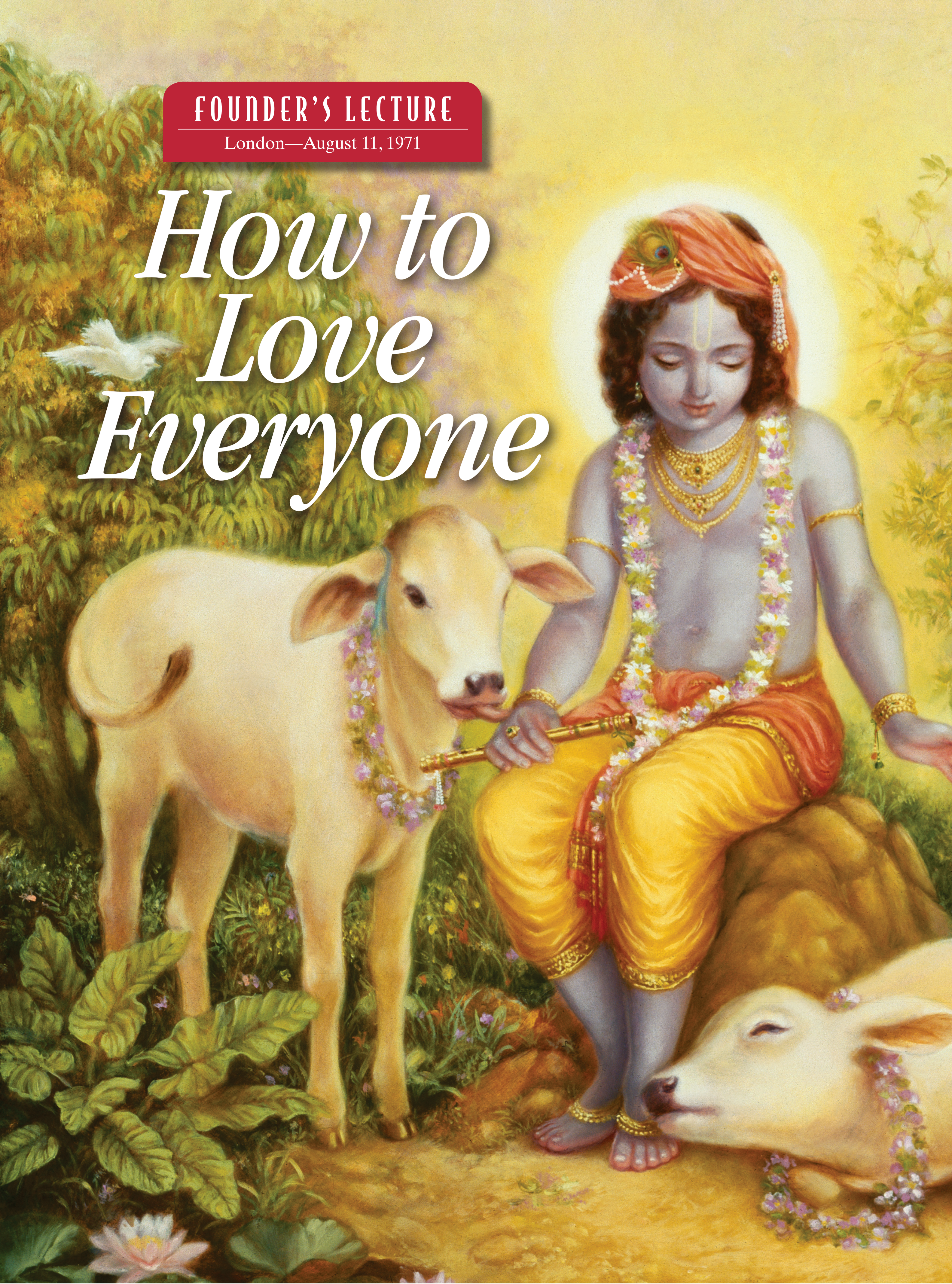
FOUNDER'S LECTURE

London—August 11, 1971

How to Love Everyone



Painting by Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa

Because Kṛṣṇa is everything, being its source, we can love everything and everyone when we learn to love Him.

by His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness

ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhis
tābhir ya eva nija-rūpatayā kalābhiḥ
goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūto
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda [Kṛṣṇa], the primeval Lord, residing in His own realm, Goloka, with Rādhā, who resembles His own spiritual figure. She is the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty-four artistic activities. Rādhā is in the company of Her confidantes [*sakhīs*], who are embodiments of the extensions of Her bodily form and are permeated and vitalized by Govinda's ever-blissful spiritual *rasa.*"
—*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.37

RĀDHĀ AND KṚṢṆA, or Govinda, are enjoying *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa,* spiritual bliss. *Cinmaya* means spiritual, and *rasa,* bliss—eternal bliss. We are also particles of that *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa. Ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt.* The *Vedānta-sūtra* (1.1.12) says that every living entity is *ānandamaya,* blissful. The living entity's nature is to be blissful, happy, always feeling pleasure, but in our material condition of life we are just the opposite. There is neither pleasure, nor knowledge, nor eternity. But these three things—eternity, bliss, and knowledge—are the symptoms of spiritual existence.

In the Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode, everything is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa's internal potency: the land, the water, the trees, the flowers, the cows, the cowherd boys. That means they are expansions of Kṛṣṇa's own person. Kṛṣṇa revealed this when Brahmā stole all the cows and calves and cowherd boys to test whether Kṛṣṇa is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa immediately expanded Himself to exactly duplicate all the missing cows, calves, and cowherd boys.

By Kṛṣṇa's energy, all variety exists in the spiritual world. The varieties in the material world are expansions of Kṛṣṇa's material energy, and in the spiritual world the varieties are expansions of His spiritual energy.

Nija-rūpa: "[Expanded from] His own form." *Goloka eva nivasati:* "He is a permanent resident of Goloka Vṛndāvana." *Akhilātma-bhūto:* "But He is everywhere." Although situated in His own abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa can expand Himself. He can manifest Himself anywhere in the material world because the material energy is His energy. Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī here in the temple are the same Kṛṣṇa and

Rādhārāṇī who are in Goloka Vṛndāvana. The deity is simply an expansion of the Lord to accept our service.

I have many times given this example: In front of your door there is a mailbox. Although it appears to be a small box, it is not different from the post office. You place a letter in the box, it goes thousands and thousands of miles away. Therefore the mailbox is a post office. Similarly, when you worship the deity, it is exactly like posting your letters in the mailbox: Your worship is accepted by Kṛṣṇa. Don't think that you are worshiping some doll. No. As the post office kindly places a box before your house to assist you, Kṛṣṇa, though living in Goloka Vṛndāvana, expands Himself as the deity to accept your humble service.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is teaching people how to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

Never consider that the deity in the temple is made of stone or brass or wood. Everything is Kṛṣṇa because everything is Kṛṣṇa's energy. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.4) it is said,

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight constitute My separated material energies." Everything is Kṛṣṇa's energy, and from everything Kṛṣṇa can appear and accept your service. This is the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā.* Kṛṣṇa Himself can appear through stone because stone is His energy. If the electric power is on, you can get electricity. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa's energy is everywhere, and you can take advantage of His energy anywhere, provided you know how to take it.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is teaching people how to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-
vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-
guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ
bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself, with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love." [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.38] The technique to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere is love of Godhead. If you learn that, it doesn't matter what religion you profess. It is of no concern. We do not say, "Become a Hindu" or "Become a Muslim" or "Become a Christian." No. We say, "Become a lover of God."

Learn how to love God. Your loving propensity is there, but it is being misplaced. It is placed on dog instead of God; therefore you are unhappy. When your loving propensity is in the proper place, you will be happy. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, love of Godhead.

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

"The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6] If you want happiness, then you must learn how to love God. You are trying to love somebody, but you are being frustrated, foiled. Nobody is the true object of love except God. And if you love God, then naturally you love everything, because God is everything.

The example is that if you pour water on the root of a tree it goes everywhere—to the twigs, to the leaves, to the flowers, everywhere. But if you pour water on the leaf, it is localized. It does not spread. Despite inventing so many kinds of humanitarian work, welfare work, still people are unhappy. Why? Because that welfare work is like pouring water on the leaf, not on the root.

The Secret of Love

Learn by Kṛṣṇa consciousness how to love Kṛṣṇa and how to love your country, your society, your friends, everything. But without loving Kṛṣṇa, you cannot really love. Loving Kṛṣṇa is the secret.

Because I love Kṛṣṇa I have come to your country. Otherwise, I had no reason to come to your country. We are preaching this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement because we love everyone. We don't make any distinction. We love animals also. We don't like to see animal killing. That is part of our message: "No meat-eating." Why? To save the animals, because we love animals also. We love even the ant—because we love Kṛṣṇa.

This is the technique of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: If you learn how to love Kṛṣṇa, then you will love everything. Otherwise, your love will be localized and you will be frustrated. It is most scientific. And our process is very simple: Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That's all. Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's name are identical. So chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa means you are associating with Kṛṣṇa; you are directly in touch with the root of everything.

By advancing in love for Kṛṣṇa you can love your society, your country, your community, your family, your husband, your wife, your children, your friend—everything. That love is complete, *pūrṇam.* And it will never end. Love of Kṛṣṇa is so complete that if you go on distributing this love, it will never be

(*please turn to page 56*)

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Abs [illegible] ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo [illegible] and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

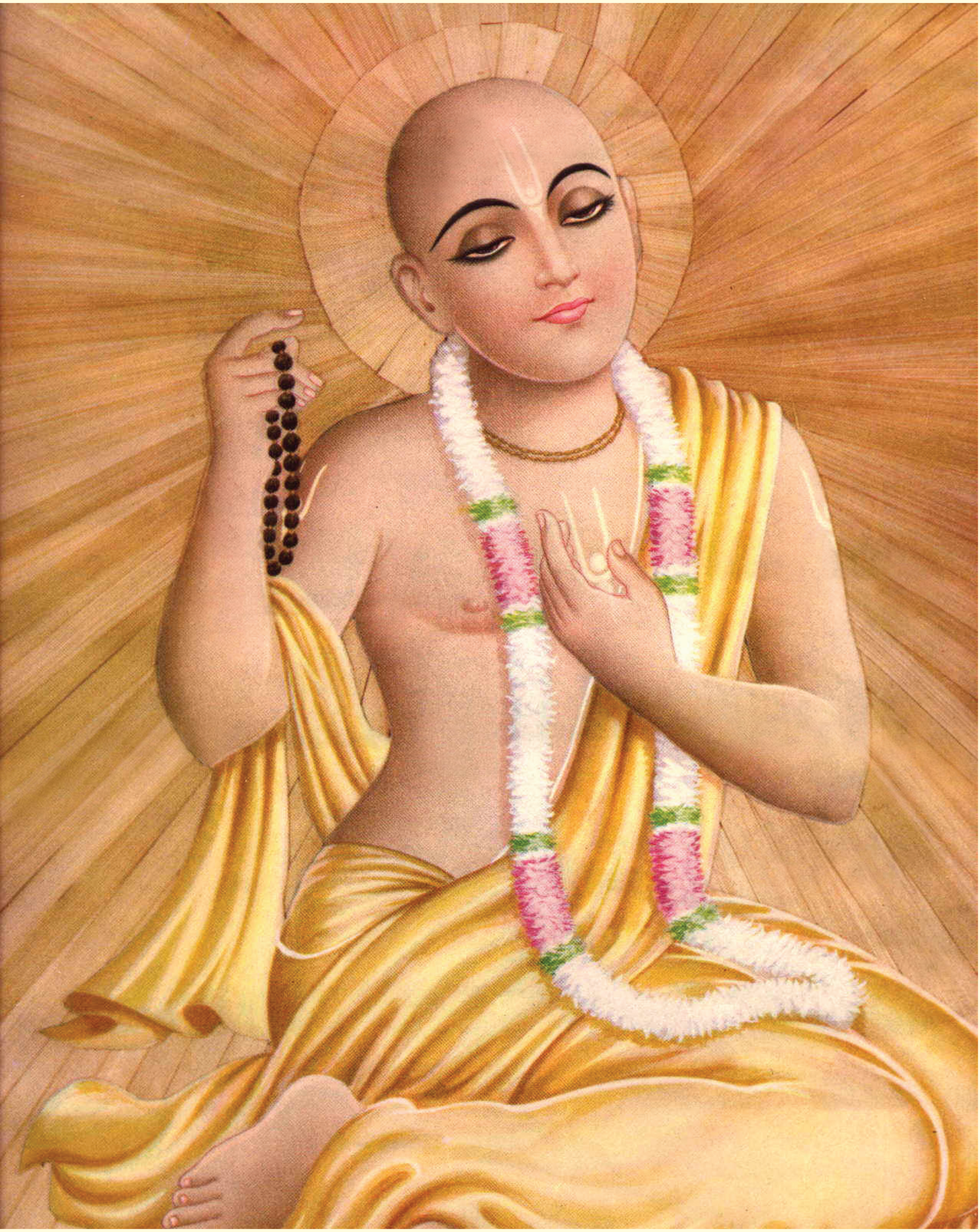
Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.



Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

JAPA And the Opening Heart

A look at Lord Caitanya's "Eight Instructions" and their relevance to japa, *the individual practice of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.*

by Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa

A FRIEND ONCE TOLD me this analogy about spiritual life: a flock of geese share strength by flying in a V formation, but if one goose goes down, the others can't help. Similarly, though seekers of enlightenment help each other, success ultimately depends on personal effort—and the kindness of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa's kindness appears in the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Even for one with no qualifications, repeating this sacred sound vibration opens the heart to ever more self-understanding and intimate love of God.

How does the avian analogy apply to chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, a practice so important for spiritual life?

Group chanting is called *saṅkīrtana* or *kīrtana;* individual chanting is called *japa.* For most people *kīrtana* is easier than *japa.* Chanting in *kīrtana* is like flying in the V formation; you get strength from others. You play or watch others play instruments, by turns you listen and sing, and you follow as the leader varies the tempo and tune.

When chanting *japa,* however, it's just you and Kṛṣṇa—and your nagging mind.

Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, though a great scholar, left just eight written verses. These quintessential verses, known as the *Śikṣāṣṭaka,* explain how Kṛṣṇa's names energize and enrich spiritual life. Here they are, in poetic English translation, with thoughts about their relevance to the all-important individual spiritual practice of *japa*.

1

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanaṁ bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇaṁ
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇaṁ vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-vardhanaṁ prati-padaṁ pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanaṁ
sarvātma-snapanaṁ paraṁ vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam

To chant the name of Kṛṣṇa
is to watch the waxing moon
bestow abundant fortune
like a lotus fully bloomed.
To chant cleans up the dust
our shining hearts accumulate,
reviving sacred knowledge
as a wife inspires her mate.
It also drenches painful flames
of endless birth and death

with oceanic waves of bliss
we crave at every step.

Chanting attentive *japa* opens one's heart to higher and higher stages of loving God, just as natural forces make a lotus unfold or the moon seem to wax.

We *japa* chanters often begin a *japa* session dull, anxious, or bewildered. We leave it strong and focused. Why? Not because our breath becomes regulated or our minds numb; we change during *japa* because, however awkwardly, we are associating with Kṛṣṇa by chanting His name.

Attentive chanting means to let go of thoughts and problems and submit to hearing the mantra. It is to trust Kṛṣṇa and abandon ourselves to Him with eyes wide open. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with such willing surrender. When we realize Kṛṣṇa's presence, at once our hearts become pleased and peaceful.

Chanting attentive japa *opens one's heart to higher and higher stages of loving God, just as natural forces make a lotus unfold.*

"As you surrender to Me," says Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11), "I reward you accordingly."

Experiencing Kṛṣṇa through *japa* each day creates a conviction that surpasses mere belief. *Japa* becomes a refuge, a safe place to go when life seems overwhelming. *Japa* becomes both the symbol and the practical means of surrender to Kṛṣṇa, and every time we chant attentively, Kṛṣṇa responds.

Chanting *japa* as if we have no one to turn to but Kṛṣṇa cleans anxieties from our minds and hearts. It transforms us from anxious, self-absorbed spiritual infants to calm, gracious, patient spiritual adults.

In this verse the Sanskrit phrase *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam* refers to the wife (*vadhū*) of transcendental knowledge (*vidyā*). This beautiful phrase captures in three Sanskrit words how *bhakti* (devotion) brings life to *jñāna* (knowledge). The scriptures provide knowledge; *japa* invokes realization of that knowledge, as a wife's sweet words encourage and enliven her husband.

Done properly, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on *japa* beads becomes a daily joy. Material life is like being trapped in a burning forest with no escape. But the fire will be smothered in the huge waves of joy unleashed by attentive *japa.*

2

nāmnām akāri bahudā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

My Lord, You have more names
than I could ever count or say,
and You invest each one to bless
my life in every way.
You kindly set no rules,
so I can always chant or call,
yet, sadly, for Your precious names
I have no taste at all.

Because attentive *japa* leads to such powerful realizations, experienced chanters share the practice, and sometimes others mistake their natural enthusiasm for fanaticism. Followers of Lord Caitanya are not fanatics, however, for Lord Caitanya is completely liberal and nonsectarian. As He declares in this verse, any name of God, chanted properly, awakens us like any other.

Why don't more people meditate with this simple, profound chanting? Though everyone feels the effect of a rousing hymn or a plaintive call to prayer, few repeat the experience within themselves by chanting constantly, or even regularly.

Why do we fail to chant? Lord Caitanya laments, *nānurāga:* "I have no taste." Thoughtful people build a taste for beneficial activities like reading and exercise; fools build a taste for poisonous habits such as intoxication and TV brainrot. In the same way, chanting *japa* is an acquired taste. Understanding the matchless value of spiritual life, the truly wise learn to nourish their spirit through God's holy names.

The next verse explains how to obtain a taste for *japa.* Be warned: The more we chant, the more we see Kṛṣṇa's greatness—and the more we become shocked by our own pathetic condition.

3

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

The soul who chants the holy name
in meek and humble mood,
respectful and without a proud,
self-righteous attitude,
submissive like a trampled straw,
forbearing like a tree,
obtains a taste to chant
Your holy names incessantly.

I confess that by chanting *japa* over the years I've discovered many unpleasant things about myself. My thoughtless actions have hurt others, and I've made a fool of myself hundreds of times. Still I approach *japa* proudly, thinking, "I know how to do this. Kṛṣṇa is mine." I fail to realize that, in fact, I am Kṛṣṇa's. My chanting is meant for His pleasure, and His pleasure is my only true pleasure.

When will I understand that Kṛṣṇa has no obligation to me, given the poor quality of my devotion? When will I understand that everyone I see is a glorious spiritual being, a son or daughter of Kṛṣṇa, worthy of respect?

Why should I, seeing my foibles, be so proud? *Japa* has opened my eyes. Though it hurts, an unpleasant reality beats a happy illusion. To the extent I confront my faults and ignore the faults of others, I will relish the sound of Kṛṣṇa's name and never give it up.

4

na dhanaṁ na janaṁ na sundarīṁ
kavitāṁ vā jagadīśa kāmaye
mama janmani janmanīśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitakī tvayi

My Lord, I don't want lovers, fame,
or endless piles of wealth;
I want to serve You, life by life,
with no thought for myself.

What do I want from Kṛṣṇa?

Some people turn to God for money. Some follow their mate to God, or turn to God to find one. Others come to God for something else but stay to enjoy the adoration of followers.

All these motives become dry, but Kṛṣṇa's loving reciprocation will sustain us and entangle us happily in His service.

To enjoy Kṛṣṇa's loving reciprocation we must chant attentive *japa*. Why?

Stated simply, Hare Kṛṣṇa means, "Dear Kṛṣṇa, please allow me to serve You." Thus, when chanting *japa* we are repeatedly praying for Kṛṣṇa's service. Though He needs nothing, He kindly accepts our service.

So sweet is the chance to serve Kṛṣṇa that Lord Caitanya prays for it to the exclusion of wealth, fame, or romance.

5

ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaraṁ
patitaṁ māṁ viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadṛśaṁ vicintaya

Though I am meant to serve You,
I have somehow fallen down
into a sea of birth and death
where I have almost drowned.

Radhanatha Jakupko

Please pluck me from this sea of death
—there's nowhere to retreat—
and place me as a speck of dust
beneath Your lotus feet.

Giving up the chase for lovers, money, and fame, we discover a new reality: We are in terrible danger. Death is looming, but we're so hooked on what's killing us that we don't care. Nor do we care for the loving service of Kṛṣṇa that can save us from death.

Growing up I learned to fear God and to love the things of this world. In the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Lord Caitanya teaches us to love God and fear the things of this world.

Why fear God, as if God were inflicting pain? God is neutral; if we want to enjoy this world, He gives us a material body with which to do it. But that body, like anything material, comes to an unwanted end. Then we need a new one to continue filling materialistic desires. Thus we flounder in an ocean of suffering—until we change.

How do we change our desires?

Kṛṣṇa explains that we can't give up a desire unless we replace it with something better. When we learn to relish chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, we will be rescued by Kṛṣṇa's grace.

6

nayanaṁ galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanaṁ gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulakair nicitaṁ vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati

I chant and wonder, "When will tears
of love adorn my eyes,

my voice choke up with joy, and all
my body's hairs arise?"

We may call for Kṛṣṇa out of fear or pain; that's better than not calling. We may also expect to advance, to learn to chant out of love. Kṛṣṇa is ecstatic; when we chant purely we associate with our ecstatic Lord. Then, naturally, we also become ecstatic.

Having repeatedly experienced that Kṛṣṇa satisfies our heart, having curled our lips and spat upon the illusions we used to chase, we learn an entirely new way to enjoy ourselves. Then we abandon ourselves to chanting.

After researching the Vedic scriptures, Lord Caitanya and His followers chronicled the path of chanting. The spontaneous symptoms described in this verse—unprovoked tears, faltering voice, bodily hairs standing on end—indicate ecstatic love of God. They are not meant for showy imitation; they naturally appear by Kṛṣṇa's grace when the lost soul finally calls out His name in a heartfelt way.

> ***Symptoms of ecstasy naturally appear by Kṛṣṇa's grace when the lost soul finally calls out His name in a heartfelt way.***

We don't chant *japa* to attain these symptoms of love of God. When they appear, they are signposts that we are progressing, as signs on the highway are not our destination but show us that our destination is near.

Yet symptoms of ecstasy may not appear, even to the sincere chanter. As His sons and daughters, we are obliged to call out for Kṛṣṇa, but He is not obliged to show up when we do.

7

yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ
govinda-viraheṇa me

O Kṛṣṇa! In Your absence
every moment lasts for years.
The whole world seems so empty
that my eyes are raining tears.

When we no longer expect happiness from illusions, we naturally expect happiness from Kṛṣṇa. Yet the ever-independent Kṛṣṇa may or may not give it. Happiness accompanies Kṛṣṇa, who comes and goes at His own sweet will.

Very advanced devotees find ecstasy in separation from Kṛṣṇa; beginners may struggle. Still, when Kṛṣṇa leaves us, where else in creation can we turn? We must call out for Him. If fact, when we don't feel Kṛṣṇa's presence it's time to chant with extra determination and patience. Kṛṣṇa accepts everyone, but He doesn't collect casual devotees. He is testing our resolve.

Though we experience Kṛṣṇa through His holy names, we discover that He does not reveal Himself at our command. Who is this unreliable person? Do we still want Him?

8

āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatāṁ karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ

My only Lord is Kṛṣṇa,
and my Lord He shall remain,
though His embrace may crush me
or His absence cause me pain.
He's free to cheat or trample me
or act in any way;
regardless, He's my very life.
I'll never go away.

Lord Caitanya's final prayer embodies the mood of Kṛṣṇa's lovers, the *gopīs,* who pined for Him after He left His home village and never returned. Their attachment to Kṛṣṇa sometimes angered their husbands and endangered their reputations, yet they could not forget Him. Their selfless, unconditional, deeply blissful love of God excels all others.

Even if we're riddled with materialistic urges, chanting *japa* attentively every day can lead us to such love. Loving Kṛṣṇa is as natural to the soul as breathing is to the body. If we associate with Kṛṣṇa through *japa,* we will quickly revive and develop the natural love of Kṛṣṇa dormant in every heart.

A Living Example

Starting in 1965, Lord Caitanya's exemplary follower Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting freely throughout the world. His humility, detachment, and ecstatic, unconditional love of Kṛṣṇa demonstrated the reality of Lord Caitanya's verses. Śrīla Prabhupāda's life and example continue to inspire millions to chant God's names.

Lord Caitanya's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* takes us from the foothills—the cleansing effect of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa—to the peak of selfless, unconditional love. To scale such a huge mountain is daunting, but bead by bead, mantra by mantra, a daily *japa* session insures our progress. Śrīla Prabhupāda showed us how.

Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa oversees the Krishna House near the University of Florida in Gainesville. His latest book is A Gator's Guide to the Gita.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to ***www.krishna.com/calendar****.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

June 19–July 18

(*Month of Vāmana*)

July

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting. Also, Guṇḍicā-mārjana: festival of cleansing the Gundicha temple in Jagannatha Puri, India.

4—Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā in Jagannatha Puri. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

8—Unmīlanī Mahā-dvādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans for Śayanā Ekādaśī.

18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

July 19–August 16

(*Month of Śrīdhara*)

23—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

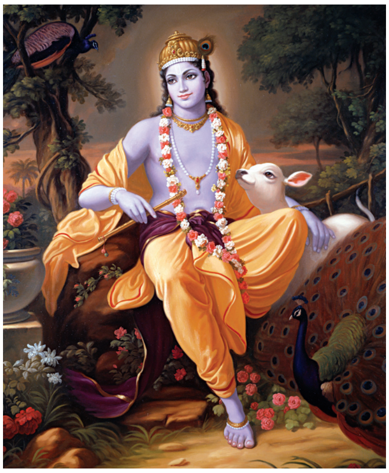
26—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

27—Anniversary of incorporation of ISKCON, in New York City, 1966.

29—Kāmikā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

August

12—Pavitropanā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. Jhulana Yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda begins.


Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

13—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

16—Jhulana Yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Second month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

August 17–September 15

(*Month of Hṛṣīkeśa*)

17—Anniversary of the departure of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to the United States in 1965.

24—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a breakfast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

25—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

27—Annadā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

September

4—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

8—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

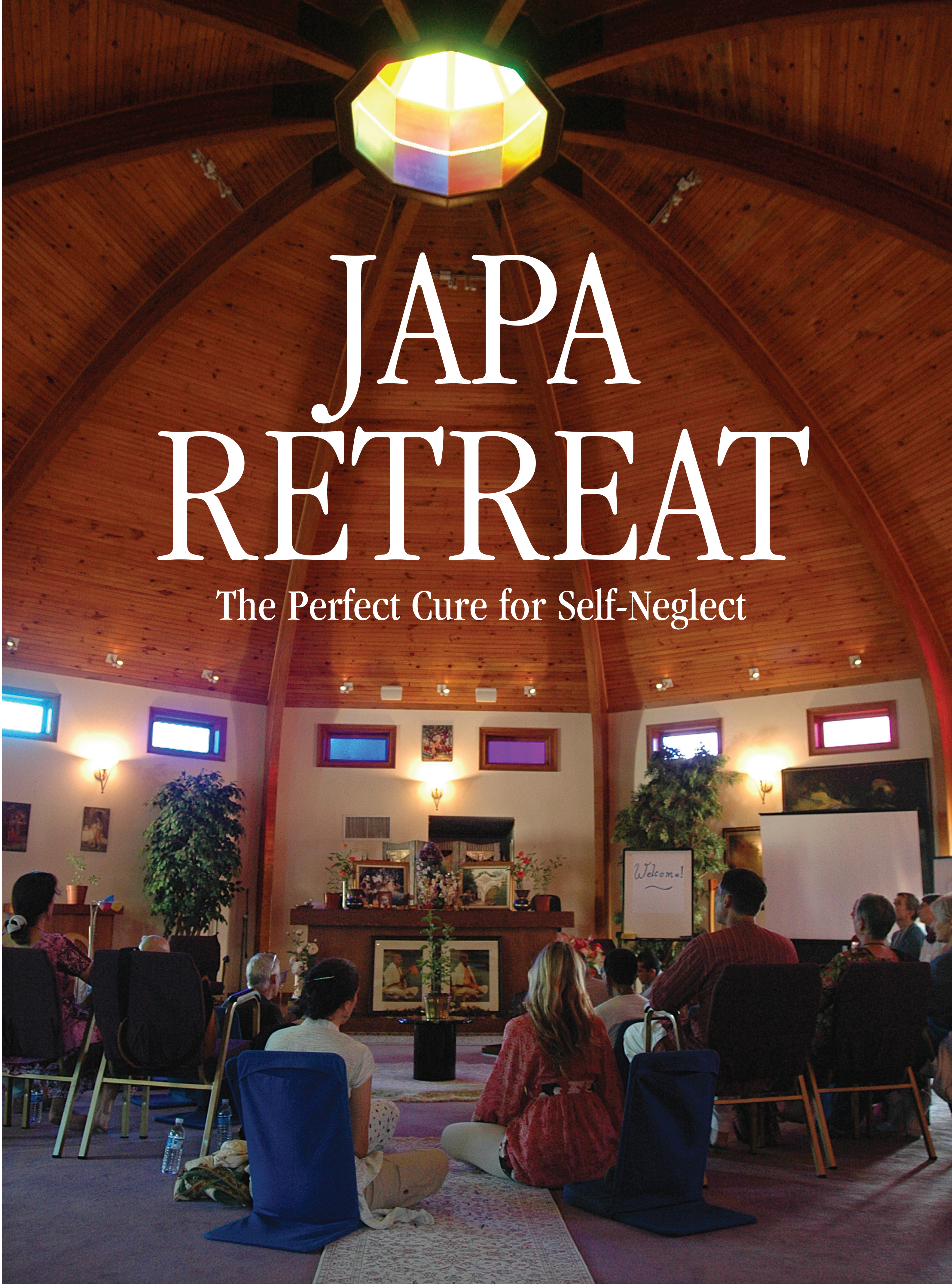
11—Parśvā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

12—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

13—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

JAPA RETREAT

The Perfect Cure for Self-Neglect



Devotees take time out to get away from their normal routines and focus on the essential practice of japa, *individual chanting of the holy names.*

by Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī

photos by Radhanatha Jakupko

Instructors and attendees at a japa *retreat at Delphi University in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Georgia (above and left). The author is in the center of the photo, kneeling, with a light-colored shawl folded over her shoulder.*

PICTURE YOURSELF on a beautiful vacation away from the distractions of home and work. Fresh air, dense forests, and tall blue mountains surround you, and you have the chance to meet with experienced teachers to explore the great spiritual benefit of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*

When the alarm goes off you're not obliged to rise to another day on the job; instead you rise to hear a running stream of nectar from the mouths of devotees who have dedicated their lives to the sweet chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Through singing, discussions, interactive exercises, delightful group practices, and many sweet loving exchanges among devotees, you are gently nudged toward perfection in chanting.

Is such vacationing an indulgence? No. Our spiritual authorities recommend the hearing and chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names as the most important service a devotee can do. Chanting is the best way to meditate on the Lord and feel His presence. The *mahā-mantra* is a prayer: "Lord Kṛṣṇa, please engage me in Your devotional service." Yet our busy lives often deny us the time or proper atmosphere we need to slow down and pay attention.

Everyone requires a vacation now and then, but devotees tend to require more from a holiday than renting a car and staying in hotels. Even a trip to holy places in India can be fraught with distractions. The Japa Retreat, now being conducted by ISKCON devotees in various parts of the world, affords an opportunity to vacation and develop spiritual practice in a

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī, who lives in Vṛndāvana, India, suggested the practice of trying to focus on just one mantra at a time.

beautiful, secluded mountain setting, or near the ocean, or in a holy place in India.

Re-Treating Myself

For those like me who have been chanting for years yet harbor regrettable habits, the Japa Retreat was a way to re-treat myself to a full deep drink of the nectar of the holy names. I found myself saying, "Oh, now I remember why I became a Hare Kṛṣṇa!"

The Japa Retreat I attended, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Georgia, came through the agency of Bhagavat Life, a service organization created by Puruṣa Sukta Dāsa and Divyāmbara Devī Dāsī.* Their desire to organize Japa Retreats (the one described in this article is the fifth in the U.S.) comes from the inspiration of His Holiness Śacīnandana Swami. Having had many insights about chanting, Śacīnandana Swami suggested chanting retreats to revitalize devotees who would like to get back to "our real business."

Śacīnandana Swami has said, "Our problem is that we do not wish to enter the struggle of the inner life of good *japa*. But without making this endeavor, without considering *japa* essential to our service to Kṛṣṇa, other services tend to fail. As you assess this retreat in the weeks that follow it, you'll understand that you have been given a lot more than you expected to help you toward the goal of effective chanting."

Tools for Better Chanting

One of our teachers at the retreat was Mahātmā Dāsa, whom I remembered from San Diego as a highly qualified trainer of new devotees. He asked us to rate our *japa* on a scale of one to ten, from horrible to perfect. Most of us had to rate ourselves at four or five, levels he said meant being just attentive enough to stay afloat in the nectar of the holy names. We were chanting just well enough to stay devotees of the Lord. If being a five could afford us that much, then what would it be like to increase to a six, or maybe even an eight? Were we ready for freedom from all material anxiety and the pure devotional service that comes

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*Ādi Puruṣa Dāsa of VIHE in Vṛndāvana also conducts a *japa* retreat.

Japa Retreat Reviews

Baḍa Haridāsa: These retreats, creating an atmosphere and association where the offenseless chanting of the holy name can be nurtured, are of paramount importance to our Society.

Manu Dāsa: My only regret is that it has taken me this long to work up the courage to attend this retreat. I came to get a taste for chanting the holy name, and I have found the company of likeminded searchers who collectively have blessed me with a taste to aspire to hanker for the nectar of offenseless, unconditional absorption in the holy names. Thank you to the mindful organizers and presenters of this retreat, who have tilled the soil of my rotten heart and given me hope that the seed of devotion will someday sprout within.

Sanjeev Aneja: This Japa Retreat was one of a kind. I have attended many, many seminars and enjoyed them too, but this was unique. Others talked about material gains, and this was about our connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is truly for a serious devotee whose primary aim is Kṛṣṇa, followed by everything else.

The location was fantastic too. Such a retreat wouldn't have the same meaning had the amenities such as TV and phones been available. Life goes on, and none of those time-wasters are needed in our progress. One day a month, if not once a week, is how I plan to build on this for the rest of my life. Silence is the key to success.

Thank you for making this wonderful experience possible at such a low cost. If anyone is wondering whether or not to attend, I say "Go for it!"

from sweet, intense *japa*?

Mahātmā spoke on a number of tools for a better relationship with the holy names, including a sacred space and introspective writing.

The Sacred Space

He first described that any successful chanter needs a "sacred space." Where do you put yourself when you begin to chant? We should be where we can welcome the *mahā-mantra* as we would a most important guest, with all attention and respect.

Some places help us hear Kṛṣṇa's name, and others don't. For example, a temple, a temple room in one's home, or a peaceful garden may be without distractions. The TV room probably won't be.

Sacred space has a lot to do with timing. It's hard to chant in the midst of household activities, so schedule your *japa* for a time with the fewest distractions. Scripture recommends the early morning hours before sunrise as an especially peaceful time. If you can chant with likeminded persons, that too will be of great help.

Perhaps more intrinsic is the sacred space between one's mouth and ears, the path the holy name travels. Smaller than a garden or a room, it is a direct route to one's soul. In this sacred space there can be melting of the heart when we try to hear the sound in an earnest and humble mood.

Another useful tool is to write answers to relevant questions: How has the holy name influenced my life? How am I grateful to the holy name? Where do I need to improve my relationship with the name?

One Mantra at a Time

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī, a Prabhupāda disciple who has served in his temples in India for many years, gave us several useful insights into the chanting of the holy name. Her slogan is "one mantra at a time."

After trying repeatedly to sincerely hear one mantra at a time, I came to wonder, is it possible I chant entire rounds of 108 mantras without hearing even one? Do I regularly let my mind sabotage my practice? She urged us to just try to carefully listen to only one mantra at a time and to be in the present. We chanted together in unison. Like a child learning to read, I felt rewarded by the struggle.

Nārāyaṇī led us in a beautiful analysis of the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* prayer of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Each of the eight verses represents an essential quality of one who practices the chanting: gratitude, lamentation, humility, taste, dependence, longing for perfection in devotion, feeling separation, and complete surrender. We were asked to think of examples in scripture of great devotees who demonstrate these various qualities.

Nārāyaṇī coached us through an exercise in which she asked us to envision our favorite deity or picture of Kṛṣṇa, and together we chanted a round dedicated to Him. We chanted His names to Him, chanting as attentively as possible. This meditation was blissful, as the focus was to offer the sound of the names for the pleasure of the holy name—that supremely beautiful Lord of our hearts.

Hatha Yoga

Devotees adept in hatha yoga explained how physiology affects psychology. Our movements and conduct during the day tend to disperse our energy, yet we can channel that energy into attentive *japa*. To do this an alert and aware mind must precede the chanting. We practiced a few exercises and breathing techniques before chanting. The exercises emphasized sitting with the spine straight and the head and neck in a good position for chanting.

Improper breathing while chanting *japa* makes us lose the

Anapayini, an accomplished Bharat Natyam dancer and instructor, chants in the solitude of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Jagannatha Candan (right) finds that a rustic wooden bench makes a suitable seat for japa. *At left, Śrī Gaurāṅgī Devī Dāsī (right) and Jaya Śrī Devī Dāsī discuss their* japa *insights.*

rhythm and experience yawning or shortness of breath. Practice of *prāṇāyāma* breathing techniques can help.

Are You Ready for The Shock of Your Life?

Yajña Puruṣa Dāsa, one of the instructors, told us he chants sixty-four rounds of Kṛṣṇa's holy names on his beads every Monday to help him meet the demands of being a temple president. One feature of the retreat was to chant sixty-four rounds ourselves, so we listened to what he had to say, knowing our success would depend upon it. He described how the mind is always engaged in two activities: accepting and rejecting.

"This accepting and rejecting goes on to placate the ego. In a mood of surrendering the false ego to the lotus feet of the Lord, we should give the foolish rascal mind a simple instruction: 'Just try to hear one mantra.' And if you do manage to hear one mantra, then praise yourself. And don't forget, you are one small step closer to meeting Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"Are you ready to meet Kṛṣṇa? Are you ready for the shock of your life? How very sweet and beautiful that will be! If you do hear one mantra, it will be so pleasurable that you won't be able to wait to hear and chant the next one!

"If you give the rascal mind a chance to hear Kṛṣṇa's names, it will say, 'Hey, what was *that*?' Eventually we will come to a point where the holy name will embrace us. Kṛṣṇa will grab us up and take over. Having understood this, we may have to admit that *japa* may be the most neglected aspect of our spiritual practice."

Mauṇa-vrata and Sixty-Four Rounds Day

By the third day of the retreat we had listened to our teachers and worked well with one another, sharing our thoughts and challenges through various exercises. We had enjoyed many holy flowing rivers of sweet *bhajanas* by Baḍa Haridāsa and the Japa Retreat Band. We took in a "Kṛṣṇa feast for the eyes" slideshow by Draviḍa Dāsa that included a recitation of the very sweet scriptural prayers he has translated into poetry. We had enjoyed getting to know many new devotee friends and had eaten to our full satisfaction the first-class *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* lovingly cooked by Apūrva Dāsa and his wife Kamalinī. We felt good to be together as a team of hopeful chanters. We were as ready as we could be for the next segment.

Together all twenty-five of us took a complete vow of silence (*mauṇa-vrata*) and began the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. We sat in a circle around a beautiful Tulasī plant in a golden planter. We chanted slowly in unison the first several rounds, one syllable at a time, one holy name at a time, one mantra at a time. We did not want to miss anything.

Over and over again I failed to hear. I felt like crying. Why so much pathos if the name is so sublime? Why failure after so much good instruction?

Well, the mind likes a drama, and the seemingly endless repetition of sixteen words doesn't seem dramatic. Yet by purposefully rejecting the distracting subjects the old rascal foolish mind likes to offer, we must keep bringing our attention back to the sound, very humbly, meekly calling upon the name.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The Lord's holy name has such powerful potency. But there is a quality to such utterances also. It depends on the quality of feeling. A helpless man can feelingly utter the holy name of the Lord, whereas a man who utters the holy name of the Lord in great material satisfaction cannot be so sincere." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.26, Purport)

I fought off my mind with the full force of what I had learned at the retreat, though it made me cry to do so. Yet I finally got to something I'd long forgotten: Kṛṣṇa's name is very, very dear to me. When I got to thirty-two rounds around midday, I felt so much connection and happiness that I didn't distract myself with eating lunch. I realized I had not chanted well in a long time, but now I had become fascinated by the holy name.

Reflections

The day following the chanting of sixty-four rounds was dedicated to finding out just what we learned from it. Devotees took turns describing the "peaks and valleys" of their extreme experience of a full day with the holy name.

One Vaiṣṇava youth, Anapayini, said, "When I was chanting and I had some feeling of Kṛṣṇa's presence, I realized that Kṛṣṇa is always there. He never leaves me. It is I who leave Him."

"For me," said Prabhupāda's disciple Mahāmāyā Dāsī, "the result of this concentrated focus on the holy name is that finally after thirty-six years of mechanical *japa,* I have a desire and an ability to focus on hearing my *japa.* What a difference attentive *japa* makes! This was exactly what I needed to really make a difference in my chanting and hearing."

Saṅkalpa Ceremony

Another great tool we were given was to create a "developed inner intention" for our chanting. Without a developed intention in our hearts, *japa-yoga* is less likely to occur. As a final ceremony of the retreat, we wrote our developed inner intention to Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi. It was an easy letter to write because it was based on all of the notes and exercises and realizations from the four days. We had a lot to draw from. ❀

Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities at New Dwaraka (ISKCON Los Angeles), where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.

To find out more about the retreats, to go http://www.bhagavatlife.com.

In your own

Which day on the Vaiṣṇava calendar has special significance for

The day on the Vaiṣṇava calendar that holds special significance for me is the appearance day of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu.

Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura writes, *nitāi-pada-kamala, koṭi-candra-suśītala:* "The lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda are as cooling as millions of moons." He also writes, *balarāma hoilo nitāi:* "Lord Balarāma appeared as Lord Nityānanda."

Lord Nityānanda Prabhu represents spiritual strength and infinite mercy, both of which I sorely need to successfully complete my journey back to Godhead.

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu is the original spiritual master, and He shows special mercy to even the most fallen souls, such as Jagāi and Mādhāi, who attacked Him. When Lord Caitanya wanted to kill these sinful brothers for their offensive attack, Lord Nityānanda stopped Him by reminding Him that saving such sinful souls was Their mission in this world.

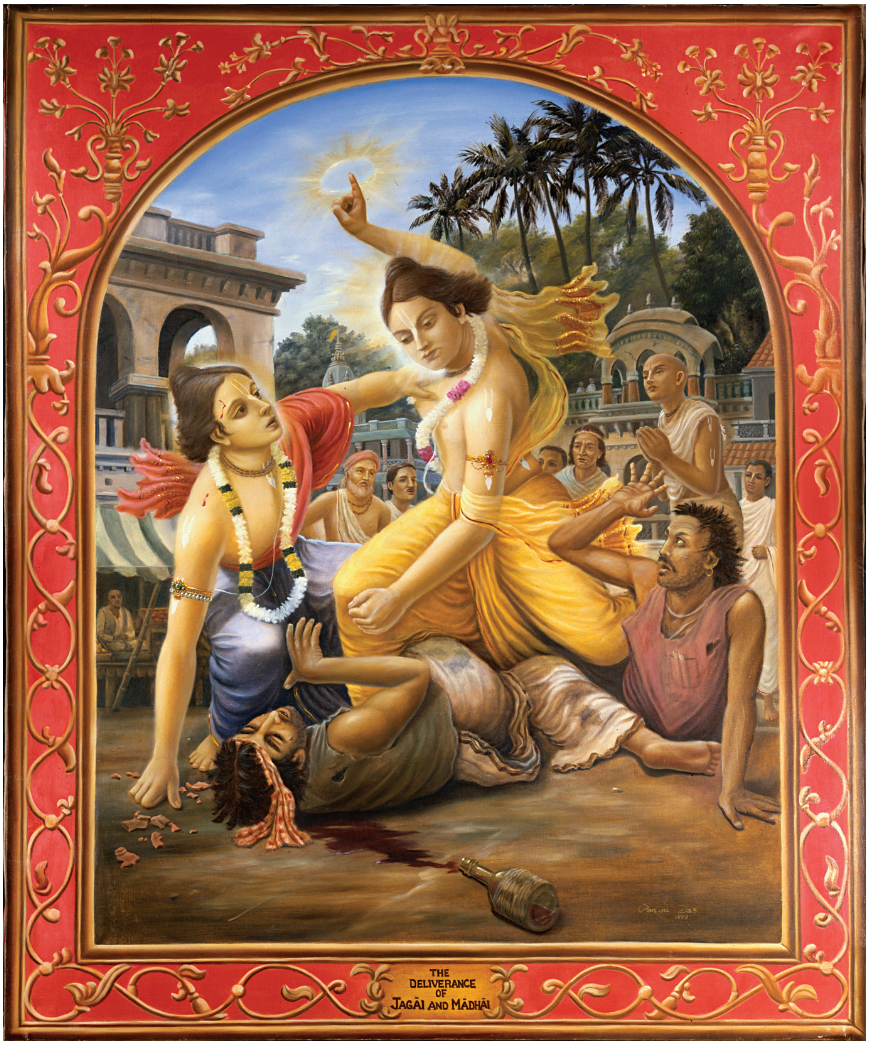
I have always been very fond of Lord Balarāma, and in fact my namesake is Daśarha, Lord Balarāma's forefather. I pray for the causeless mercy of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.

Daśarha Dāsa
Marble, North Carolina

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāstamī is the most special day of the year for me. Celebrating the appearance anniversary of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is a very happy occasion, especially in the association of devotees.

I joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement on my eighteenth birthday, which happened to fall on Janmāṣṭamī, August 11, 1974. Two weeks earlier in Chicago I had met the Radha Damodara Traveling Sankirtan Party, headed by Viṣṇujana Mahārāja and Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami. After hearing the beautiful chanting of Viṣṇujana Mahārāja and the expert preaching of Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, I wanted to join their bus group.

I remembered hearing that they were going to New Vrindavan in West Virginia to celebrate Janmāṣṭamī. So I took a Greyhound bus from my home in Wisconsin to West Virginia, walked onto the grounds, and immediately saw the RDTSKP bus. When I approached the bus I met Dhṛṣṭadyumna Prabhu, who introduced me to the two *sannyāsīs.* I asked if I could join, and soon after, Dhṛṣṭadyumna was shaving my head. After taking a shower and receiving my first set of devotee clothes, I joined the ecstatic


THE DELIVERANCE OF JAGĀI AND MĀDHĀI

Painting by Pāṇḍu Dāsa

Lord Nityānanda restrains Lord Caitanya from killing Jagāi and Mādhāi.

words . . .

Pentip photographer: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

you, and why?

kīrtanas. There is nothing more satisfying than congregational chanting of the names of God.

I realize that my real self-interest is Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that my real friends are the devotees, who are selflessly trying to enlighten fallen conditioned souls like me.

Bhagavān Ācārya Dāsa
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Nityānanda Prabhu's appearance day

has always had a special place in my heart. Two years ago I had been wondering how I could glorify Lord Nityānanda properly on His special day. I kept racking my brain, but nothing was coming. When His appearance day came, I suddenly had an inspiration to write a poem about Him. And within five minutes I had written ten verses. I offered the poem at the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda that day.

I realized that Lord Nityānanda Himself had given His special favor for me to be able to write that poem, because I had never been able to write poems before. I hope that Lord Nityānanda continues to let me serve Him eternally in various ways.

Sridevi Banerjee
Basking Ridge, New Jersey

All the days are special,

but the appearance day and disappearance day of Śrīla Prabhupāda are the most special. I can't imagine the material world without His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. He has saved us. Even though we are in this material world, there's nothing better than Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I pray that in my next life I can be a fulltime devotee of the Lord.

Without Śrīla Prabhupāda we in the West would not have known this wonderful ISKCON. My husband and I live in Port Elizabeth, and by Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy we are able to assist with the building of the temple. We are determined to build it, and we know that Śrīla Prabhupāda will give us the necessary knowledge and guidance.

Vrindadevi Mothan
Port Elizabeth, South Africa

It has to be Ekādaśī,

the eleventh day of the lunar cycle, as per the Vaiṣṇava calendar. I fast on Ekādaśī because it lightens my heart, and in my faith I am closer to Kṛṣṇa, possibly closer to enlightenment than I have been in my other lifetimes. I do not want liberation. I do not want anything when I feel close to Him. I feel His presence, and I feel at peace. Then my worship of Kṛṣṇa is not idle; it celebrates the inner peace I feel. It is important to my existence and my consciousness.

Anupama Punith
Mumbai, India

Jayānanda Prabhu's disappearance day

is very important. With topmost humility he guides us and allows us to help him serve Śrīla Prabhupāda. I use the word *allows* because Jayānanda Prabhu takes the bums, drunkards, and otherwise useless conditioned souls and gives them the taste of devotional service. After he gives us this taste, we are rescued by the *bhakti* he exemplified.

A. D. Hill
Blue Ridge, Georgia

Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day

is my favorite holiday because on that day devotees reveal through their heartfelt offerings the inspiration behind their life of devotional service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission. It's also special because you hear Prabhupāda stories you never heard and relish again those you have heard many times.

Prabhupāda brings everyone together. His Vyāsa Pūjā day brings out the best in all of us and pools our inspiration, giving us spiritual strength for another year of service. Not only that, but the feast, cooked with great devotion and one of the most opulent of the year, often features his favorites, like *kachauris, karela,* and *laddu*—a very pleasant way to remember Prabhupāda.

Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa
Mayapur, India

Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day

—a special day to remember him, because without his temples, books, and devotees, I wonder if my spiritual life would have ever reawakened.

Sathiya Ramakrishnan
Brisbane, Australia

HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

What point of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness do you find the most appealing or persuasive?

Go to Krishna.com/inyourownwords and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in our Nov/Dec issue. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 15.

The SCIENCE Of Knowing GOD

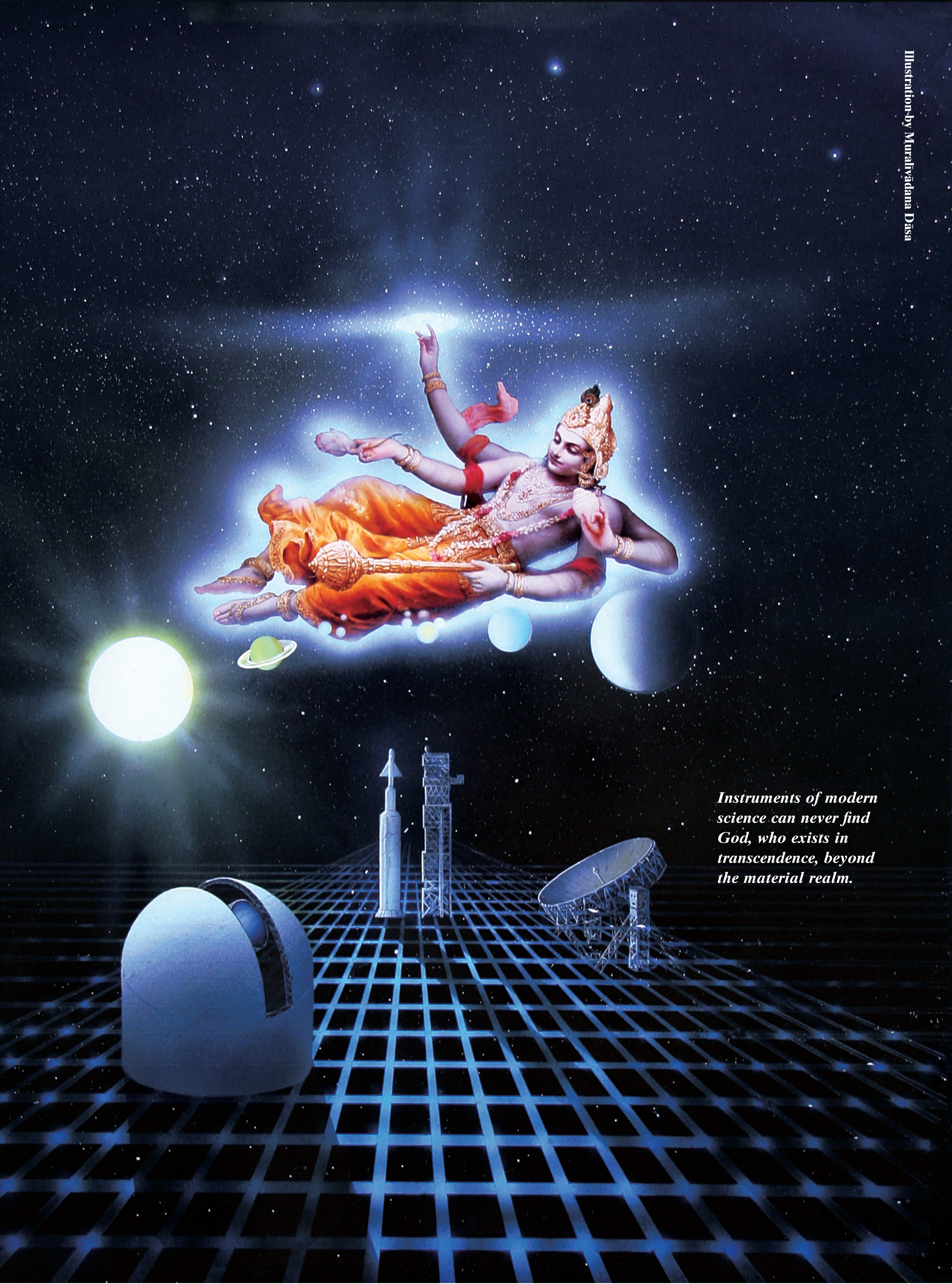
Can the investigation of God through the method of Kṛṣṇa consciousness really be called scientific?

by Navin Jani

GOD: THE EVIDENCE; *The God Delusion*; *God: The Failed Hypothesis*; *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. Apparently, writing about God is the latest rage among scientists, both theistic and atheistic. Many of these authors have also been invited to speak to college crowds, and they are causing quite a stir. But is this really the best way to approach the question of God's existence? Conventional science, particularly in its "hard" forms such as physics and biology, doesn't seem to offer the right tools and techniques with which to come up with a definitive answer. On the other hand, many religious approaches seem to preclude the rigorous application of reason and the opportunity for individual experimentation. Between these two less than satisfactory alternatives, the Vedic literature of ancient India offers what could be a promising third option. To satisfy ourselves that this is so, we'll first have to look at why conventional science can't get the job done, and then move on to understand how the spiritual science of the Vedic literature succeeds in this task without compromising what modern people like about science.

Two cardinal doctrines present major obstacles to conventional science as a way to know God. First is the doctrine of naturalism, the assumption that all natural phenomena have natural causes. ("Natural" in this context means empirically observable, or perceivable through the five senses.) This is a foundational assumption of scientific research, and its acceptance in effect rules out any reality beyond the reach of the senses.

That being said, there are somewhat softer interpretations of this doctrine. Some scientists distinguish between metaphysical and methodological naturalism. Metaphysical naturalism is the view, described above, that behind everything in the world is an empirical cause. According to this view, the sun rises because of the rotation of the



Instruments of modern science can never find God, who exists in transcendence, beyond the material realm.

Illustration by Muralivādana Dāsa

earth, and certainly not because it is pulled along by an imperceptible entity riding a golden chariot. Methodological naturalism, however, merely limits how we *study* the world to empirical observations (things we can touch, see, feel, and so on), while not necessarily ruling out supernatural explanations for these observations. According to this view, a chariot could possibly pull the sun, but the only acceptable way to test this proposition would be to use telescopes and similar instruments. Thus, supernatural phenomena may exist, but supernatural means are not permitted as a way to verify them. Although this perspective is more accommodating, we'll see below that it is still unnecessarily restrictive for one serious about investigating the existence of God.

Is there no way to employ rational methods of observation and experimentation to understand the Supreme?

The second hindrance is the doctrine of falsification. Popularized by the philosopher of science Karl Popper, this doctrine holds that for a statement to be considered scientific, one must be able to prove it false. In other words, if scientist A makes some claim but there is no way for scientist B to show that it is wrong, then the claim is considered unscientific. It can't be tested, so it's disregarded. An interesting consequence of accepting such a criterion for science, and one we'll explore more fully later, is that it becomes impossible to prove anything. One is only able to disprove.

Nevertheless, such is the functioning of science under the doctrine of falsification. Science accepts a theory if it can be used to reliably explain and predict natural phenomena and if no data contradict it. If it is refuted at some point, then another theory is accepted, and so the cycle continues. While the mercurial knowledge produced from such an approach might be acceptable for other purposes, it is not a proper basis for understanding God.

Double Blinders

Why do these twin doctrines of conventional science, naturalism and falsification, become so problematic when applied to the study of the divine? Because they're unwarranted blinders. Let's perform a thought experiment to find out how. Suppose vehement and gifted theists, peerless in their execution of conventional scientific investigation and consummate in their dedication to an omnipotent divine being, suddenly took over all the great research universities and institutes. Given decades of time, what is the farthest such God-fearing geniuses could take us? They could surely discredit every scientific theory ever proposed that did not include a rigorous conception of God. They could also propose elaborate models of their own that both centered on God and perfectly accorded with every piece of empirical data ever observed. But the million-dollar question is, Would they have *proven* the existence of God?

The answer is no. They would certainly have turned atheism into an unreasonable stance that no intelligent person could hope to justify. And they would have elaborated a comprehensive picture of the world as dependent on God in every way. But they would not have proven that God exists. Naturalism would prevent them from introducing data and evidence that transcend the five senses, and falsification would prevent them from establishing any kind of conclusive truth. Shackled by these ideological handcuffs of conventional science that limit it to disproving theories using natural data, they would never be able to produce positive evidence of a supernatural entity.

So where does that leave us, the spiritually inquisitive rationalists? If even in such an ideal scenario, conventional science could not give us the satisfaction of *knowing* that God exists, are we left with only blind faith in what the authorities tell us? Is there no way to employ rational methods of observation and experimentation to understand the Supreme? As it happens, the Vedic scriptures of ancient India provide us with just such an alternative.

Enlightenment Roots

To appreciate the value of what the Vedic literature offers, we must first understand that the scientific establishment cherishes naturalism and falsification because these help distinguish science from pseudoscience. Today's researchers are intellectual descendants of the Enlightenment, a movement in eighteenth-century Europe that shifted the gaze of humanity from the heavens to the earth and whose proponents esteemed reason and progress over dogma and tradition. As such, members of the scientific community constantly seek to delimit science as a way to explore the world with reason and the intellect, a way that is open to individual endeavor and initiative. In contrast, they vigilantly expel to the realm of pseudoscience any approaches they see as dependent on subjective emotion or passive reception, which for them usually includes religion of any kind. Both naturalism and falsification aid such a separation, and hence mainstream researchers have come to accept them as doctrines.

Granting that the motive underlying their acceptance is bona fide—distinguishing disciplined inquiry from whimsical allegation—a critical question is whether these doctrines are the only means to achieve this end. Not if we engage the Vedic wisdom. While avoiding the pitfalls that naturalism and falsification present, the Vedic literature gives a way to get knowledge that is nevertheless rigorous, systematic, and verifiable. Indeed, the traditional Vedic method of knowing God (as presented in scriptures like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) is a model of good science, albeit a science adapted in unavoidable ways to the study of spirit.

Methods of the Soft Sciences

The first (rather unremarkable) adaptation is the realization that God is a person who must be dealt with accordingly, not an inert substratum of the universe that we can dig up and put on a microscope slide. Therefore if we are to look to science as a model, we must look to the social rather than the natural sciences.

Certainly many "hard" scientists scoff at the idea of disciplines like psychology, sociology, and economics being considered science at all, but that has not stopped legions of thoughtful people from trying to apply the scientific method to the study of human beings and their societies. These social scientists are forced to take into account qualities in their subjects, such as self-awareness and self-determination, that natural scientists, who research inert matter or sub-human species, generally take the liberty of ignoring. Since even the study of humans as conscious agents is a matter for social science, why would we use the methods of the natural sciences to study God? If anything, He is superhuman.

How then might we define the spiritual social science of the Vedic literature? We can define conventional science, social or otherwise, as "the objective observation of the natural realm by the senses and their extensions." But given that God is known in the Vedic literature as Adhokṣaja ("beyond the reach of the senses") and Acintya ("inconceivable"), the need to adapt this definition to the study of transcendence becomes obvious. A definition of spiritual science that takes God's transcendental nature into account might be "the subjective experience of the transcendental realm by the consciousness, in accordance with the direction of revealed scripture."

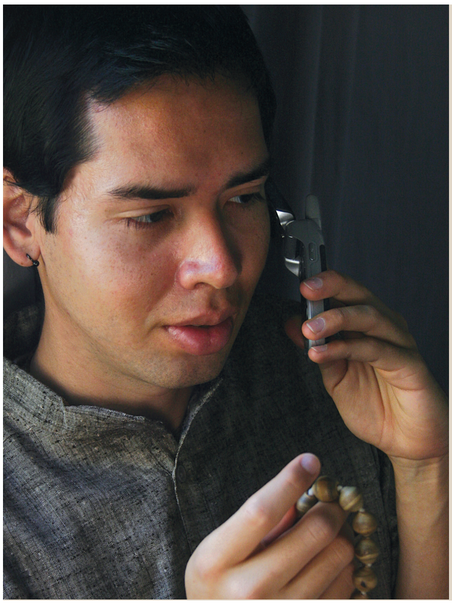
Is this new definition no longer scientific? Śrīla Prabhupāda apparently didn't think so; he referred to the practice of spiritual life as the science of self-realization. Let's review the components of this "science of self-realization" and see if such a perspective is justified.

To begin with, our new definition of science involves subjectivity rather than objectivity. But then, modern science (through the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle and quantum mechanics) has brought the observer into the equations of physics and prevented him or her from remaining safely on the sidelines. Thus, the presence and perceptions of the person doing the measuring color every act of measurement, and there is no such thing as knowledge independent of the knower. Yes, these truths operate on the infinitesimal quantum scale, but the point is that conventional science has essentially shown objectivity to be illusory, so we can hardly be criticized for talking about a science based on subjective experience.

The next component of our definition of spiritual science is the use of consciousness, rather than our physical senses, as our primary research instrument. This obviously violates the doctrine of methodological naturalism, which restricts measurements to instruments that extend the senses. But is our definition still scientific in meaningful ways?

Isomorphism

Consider the principle of isomorphism, which dictates that the instrument used to measure a certain



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phenomenon should be appropriately matched to that phenomenon. To depend solely on the five senses (and their mechanical extensions) in our search for God violates this principle; they can only perceive matter, whereas our subject is spiritual. Considering this limitation, it is only reasonable to replace them with a more appropriate measuring tool. To dogmatically cling to only those instruments with which one is comfortable or familiar—in the face of their obvious inappropriateness—is the sign of an irrational researcher, not a good scientist. As the famous chemist John Platt wrote several decades ago in the journal *Science*:

> Beware of the man of one method or one instrument, either experimental or theoretical. He tends to become method-oriented rather than problem-oriented. The method-oriented man is shackled; the problem-oriented man is at least reaching freely toward what is most important.

If we are to successfully research the existence of God, as good scientists we must use whatever method is best suited to the problem at hand. The Vedic literature informs us that to understand the supreme spirit, the supreme consciousness, the supreme self, the only suitable instrument is our own spirit, our own consciousness, our own self. Indeed, only in our capacity as portions of His divinity can we connect with God.

Using Consciousness To Investigate God

Having sagaciously chosen consciousness as our instrument, how should we employ it? This is where the guidance of revealed scripture becomes crucial. Following scripture essentially means studying God on His own terms, for He is the ultimate source of scripture.

Adapting to the needs and demands of a subject is not alien to conventional social science research. Consent and access are of paramount importance, because human beings cannot be manipulated against their will as if they were mere vials of chemicals or laboratory chimpanzees. If these considerations are critical in studying ordinary people, we should not be surprised to find they are important in studying God. If we are to succeed, we need Him to consent to our study and grant us access to Him. We might find this subordinate status unpalatable, but we must accept that we are trying to meet with the busiest, richest, most powerful, and most famous person in existence.

Social science researchers often speak of critically positioned persons who can help them make important contacts as "gatekeepers." As it turns out, God has his own gatekeepers, and we need to work through them to gain an audience with God, just as we would work through a corporate hierarchy to arrange a meeting with a CEO.

Fortunately for us, in *Bhagavad-gītā* God has elaborately presented the procedures by which we can gain access to Him. Among these the most foundational is the need to accept a guru. Is such a move unscientific? Not at all. Just as any doctoral student learns the art of research from an advisor, so too the spiritual aspirant must take instruction from an expert. Seasoned researchers, of either spirit or matter, can pass on finer points of technique and practice.

The Vedic approach to knowing God thus violates the doctrine of naturalism in its reliance on supernatural methods, yet it is surprisingly consistent with the spirit of science, and even many of its essential principles. It is an improved science, however, in that it allows access to an entirely different dimension of reality, systematically and with repeatability.

What of the other impediment to conventional scientific knowledge of God, the doctrine of falsification? How does the science of the Vedic literature address this limitation?

Two Perspectives On Knowledge

Once again a bit of background discussion is needed before we can answer such questions. Conventional science and Vedic science have dramatically divergent perspectives on knowledge. The former holds that human beings can't know anything positively or independently. Rather, based on the empirical data we gather by observing and interacting with the physical world, we constantly refine what we consider

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truth. Our knowledge base is thus relative and ever changing.

Ultimately, such a state of affairs really means we don't *know* anything. I may say I know that the sun will rise tomorrow or that there is a country called China halfway around the world from the U.S., but my so-called knowledge is based only on my experience. If tomorrow the sun doesn't rise or I fly to China only to find out it doesn't exist, I would simply revise what I considered truth. Today's dependable knowledge would become tomorrow's mythology. In light of such an understanding of knowledge, the doctrine of falsification makes sense. We can't really know what is true, so let's just spend our time showing what is definitely *not* true, and take what's left over as good enough for now.

The Vedic scriptures present a different view of knowledge. They claim that we can know things for certain, intrinsically and independently. This absolute knowledge is not subject to the fluxes of our ever-changing world. Not surprisingly, this principle applies most powerfully and most gloriously to the one question we should most want to answer: Is there a God? Sounds wonderful, we may say, but is this purportedly absolute knowledge scientific? It certainly seems so. Although presented in revealed scripture, one need not accept it blindly, based solely on someone else's word or experience. True to the spirit of scientific inquiry, it can be verified by individual endeavor.

More Scientific than Science

In fact, one could argue that this process is even more scientific than conventional science. After all, why do many people choose science, rather than, say, religion, as a means to acquire knowledge? I assume it is because if they are going to have to rely on information from some outside source, over some sort of authority figure, they prefer their own senses (which are an outside source in that I am different from my eyes, which can and do deceive me). At least then they are involved in the process and not merely passive recipients. But the Vedic literature boldly declares that you don't have to rely on any outside source—you can know for yourself. Knowledge does not have to stay externally dependent, on either an authority figure or our own senses, but can become something genuinely internal. What could be more satisfying to people who want to see for themselves?

In this way the Vedic method allows us to transcend the restrictions of falsification and acquire true positive knowledge, but in a way harmonious with scientific ideals like independent observation and verification.

The Vedic scriptures claim that we can know things for certain, intrinsically and independently.

Of course, we begin by accepting the version of scripture on faith, but again, is that really so unscientific? Every conventional research investigation begins with a hypothesis, a formulation of what the researcher expects to find. This hunch can come from theory, observation, previous research, life experience, intuition—just about anywhere. As long as the methods used in investigating the hypothesis are rigorous, its source is irrelevant. So why *not* start from scripture?

Indeed, even before we begin our investigation, scripture plays an important role. Lest we have trouble imagining what it feels like to have such positive knowledge, the Vedic scriptures use analogies to inspire us. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the opening of the most confidential chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* (Chapter 9) that the knowledge He is about to describe gives "direct experience" (*pratyakṣa*). Although the subject being discussed is clearly spiritual, the Sanskrit word used is the same as that used in physical sensation. And if that doesn't give us enough of an idea, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42) assures us:

> Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things—these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way that pleasure, nourishment, and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating.

By faithfully following the procedures God has given in the Vedic literature, we can expect to experience Him in as tangible a way as we experience a meal. And it doesn't stop at the internal. Rather, both the *Gītā* (6.30) and the *Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45) inform us that at a certain stage of advancement, we'll see God in everything and everyone.

At this point it should be clear that what the Vedic literature offers is a genuinely scientific way to know God. Rather than invoking mere sentimentality or blind faith, it sets forth a coherent process that incorporates both reason and individual endeavor, and then invites willing souls to make their own investigation. So, for those of us who truly want to research the existence of God, the predicament is clear: Running on the two rails of naturalism and falsification, the locomotive of conventional science can take us some distance in the right direction. But sooner or later we have to board the airplane of Vedic science to reach our desired destination. So why wait until the end of the line?

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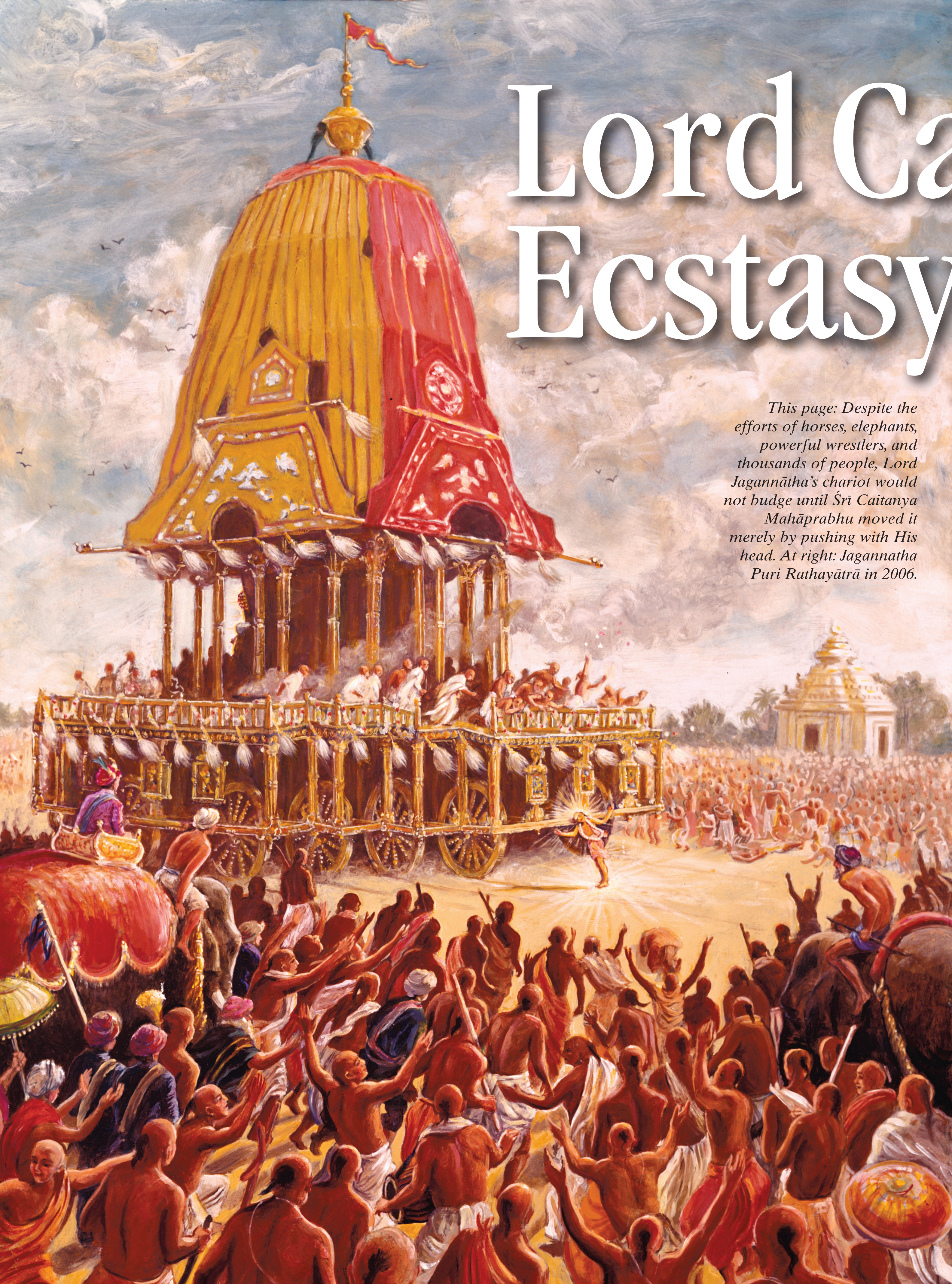
Lord Ca Ecstasy



This page: Despite the efforts of horses, elephants, powerful wrestlers, and thousands of people, Lord Jagannātha's chariot would not budge until Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu moved it merely by pushing with His head. At right: Jagannatha Puri Rathayātrā in 2006.

aitanya's
y at Rathayātrā

Being Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu could relish the spiritual tastes of Lord Jagannātha's chariot festival like no one else.

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by Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa

WHENEVER I attend Rathayātrā in cities across America, I recall my cherished memories of attending Lord Jagannātha's chariot festival in Jagannatha Puri, Orissa, as a young boy. I'm reminded of the thrill I felt when my father took me to Grand Road, the traditional route of the Rathayātrā festival, to witness the spectacular Pāṇḍu Vijaya Utsava, the ceremonial procession of the Lord from His throne to His splendid chariot. Decorated with gems, flower garlands, yellow silk cloth, and a gigantic multi-colored crown, the Lord appeared especially effulgent. Indeed, the Vedic scriptures tell us that as Lord Jagannātha proceeds from the main temple to the Gundicha Temple in His chariot adorned with a bright, multicolored canopy, He becomes the center of attraction for the entire universe. I remember the loud *kīrtanas* all around me ringing in my ears, the congregational chanting rising above the rhythmic percussion. In unison, devotees chanted "Jaya Jagannātha!" ("All glories to the Lord of the universe!")

Years later, while I was staying in Mumbai, I visited Jagannatha Puri during the Rathayātrā Festival. Many ISKCON devotees from around the world had gathered to chant and dance in front of the chariots of Jagannātha, His elder brother Baladeva (Balarāma), and Their sister Subhadrā. During this period, Puri becomes flooded with pilgrims enthusiastic to see Lord Jagannātha and offer Him prayers from the side of the road, or even from trees and rooftops. Śrīla Prabhupāda has mentioned that even the demigods and demigoddesses become so eager to see the Lord and His colorful chariot festival that the traffic of their celestial airplanes congests the sky.

According to the *Skanda Purāṇa*, Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā has been going on for thousands of years. When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as Lord Caitanya, who is Kṛṣṇa in the form of His devotee, He took part in the festival every year for eighteen years so that He could relish the transcendental bliss of reciprocation with the Supreme Lord.

Five hundred years ago Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, West Bengal, on the bank of the holy river Ganges in the house of Jagannātha Miśra and Śacīdevī. He descended for two main reasons, external and internal. His external reason was to deliver souls from the material world by inspiring them to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa congregationally. The Vedic scriptures recommend this as the spiritual process for this age, the *yuga-dharma*.

The internal reason for Kṛṣṇa's appearance as Lord Caitanya is to relish the depth and bliss of Rādhārāṇī's love for Him and to experience, as a devotee, the sweetness

Painting by Locana Dāsa

King Pratāparudra and Lord Caitanya

ONE WITNESS to Lord Caitanya's spiritual ecstasies was Mahārāja Pratāparudra, the king of Orissa. In the days before the Rathayātrā, when Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced in Jagannātha's temple, King Pratāparudra watched the Lord's beautiful performance from his terrace. After he retired to his chamber for the evening, the king continued to envision the Lord's body, covered with tears and dust. Doubt about Lord Caitanya's divinity crept into his mind.

That night he dreamed that Jagannātha's throne was empty, and the next moment he saw Lord Caitanya sitting there in the same condition—dust smeared over His body. The king awoke, concluded that Lord Caitanya is none other than Lord Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa), and cried out for his former ignorance.

Refused an Audience

This realization increased the intensity of King Pratāparudra's eagerness to see Lord Caitanya, just as a thirsty Chataka bird cries in anguish for a few drops of rainwater. Still, the Lord would not see him. Lord Caitanya strictly followed the vow of a *sannyāsī* (renunciant) not to associate with materialistic persons, and so He flatly denied giving the king an audience.

"Such interviews ruin a *sannyāsī* in this world and the next," Lord Caitanya said, "and make Him an object of ridicule. Just as a spot of ink on a white cloth cannot hide itself, so the least fault of a *sannyāsī* is sure to be criticized."

While Caitanya danced during the Rathayātrā, He fell down right in front of King Pratāparudra, who lifted Him up. Śrī Caitanya became upset by the touch of a worldly person, and the king became frightened.

Sārvabhauma, one of Śrī Caitanya's close associates, consoled the king, telling him not to worry: "The Lord is very merciful to you, but He is acting in that way just to teach others."

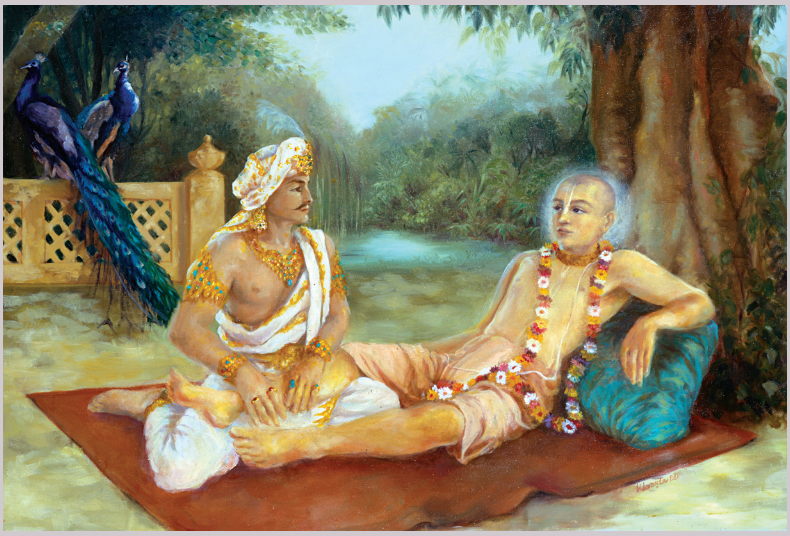
The Lord wanted to set an example of appropriate behavior for a *sannyāsī,* although as the Supreme Lord He could act in any way He desired.

A King in Vaiṣṇava Dress

When the chariots stopped at Balagandi, just before the Gundicha temple, Lord Caitanya entered a nearby flower garden to rest. King Pratāparudra was still eager to see the Lord, so he followed Sārvabhauma's advice and dressed in the robes of a humble devotee. He approached the resting Lord and, while massaging His feet, recited the part of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that describes Kṛṣṇa's most intimate pastimes with the *gopīs.* When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard these verses, He was extremely pleased and continually urged the king to go on reciting. The Lord enjoyed limitlessly. Then, when He heard a particular verse (10.31.9), He suddenly rose and embraced the king.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "You have given Me invaluable gems, but I have nothing to give you in return. Therefore I am simply embracing you."

As the Lord recited the verse again and again, He and the king trembled and tears flowed from their eyes.


Painting by Līlāmṛta Devī Dāsī

Not recognizing the king, Lord Caitanya asked, "Who are you? You have done so much for Me. All of a sudden you have come here and made Me drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes."

The king replied, "My Lord, I am the obedient servant of your servants, and I desire that you will accept me as the servant of your servants."

Lord Caitanya blessed him and revealed His divine opulence. He offered His own garland to Pratāparudra and instructed him to stay always in the mission of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He then revealed that He had come to Puri specifically to meet Sārvabhauma, Rāya Rāmānanda, and the king himself, who lived the rest of his life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

and charm of His own personality. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa, but His mood is that of Rādhārāṇī, who exhibits the highest form of *kṛṣṇa-prema,* pure love of God. He is called Gaurāṅga ("golden body") because, like Rādhā, His bodily luster is like that of molten gold.

During the later part of His life, Lord Caitanya lived in Puri and was completely immersed in pastimes with His intimate associates and the deity of Lord Jagannātha, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Every day, Lord Caitanya visited Jagannātha's temple to see His beloved.

The Deep Significance of Rathayātrā

ALTHOUGH MANY people can enjoy Rathayātrā as a colorful festival, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, especially relish its deep internal significance because they regard it as commemorating one of Kṛṣṇa's most touching pastimes.

When Kṛṣṇa was present on earth five thousand years ago, He lived in Vṛndāvana and Mathura during His childhood and youth and later became the king of Dwaraka. Once, during a solar eclipse, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Subhadrā, and other residents of Dwaraka traveled by chariots to Kurukshetra to bathe in a holy pond there. Nanda Mahārāja, Yaśodā Māyī, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the *gopīs* (cowherd girls), *gopas* (cowherd boys), and other residents of Vṛndāvana, who were burning in separation from Kṛṣṇa, went to meet Kṛṣṇa at Kurukshetra.

The residents from Vṛndāvana were pleased to see Kṛṣṇa, but Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* could not welcome His regal mood. Horses, elephants, servants, bodyguards, and great warriors surrounded Him. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs* burned with the desire for Kṛṣṇa to return to Vṛndāvana and enjoy with them as an ordinary cowherd boy, accompanied only by His beautiful flute. They tried to convince Him to go back with them, and in their hearts they tried to pulled Him toward Vṛndāvana.

Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas regard the Rathayātrā festival as the heartfelt drawing of Kṛṣṇa toward Vṛndāvana. The temple of Lord Jagannātha in Puri is the replica of the kingdom of Dwaraka, where Kṛṣṇa enjoys His Supreme opulence, and the temple at Gundicha, to which the Lord is pulled in His chariot, stands for Vṛndāvana, the highest realm of His sweetest pastimes.

Seeking Solace at Ālarnātha

Two weeks before the Rathayātrā festival, Lord Jagannātha is publicly bathed in a ceremony known as *snāna-yātrā.* He then supposedly catches a cold and goes into seclusion. The temple is closed to the public while He "recovers." To help Him regain His strength for the chariot festival, He is offered *kichri* (rice and lentils cooked together) and ginger-lemon tea with herbs and honey. His "illness" is part of the Supreme Lord's pastimes to engage His devotees in His service.

Unable to see Lord Jagannātha, Caitanya Mahāprabhu became distraught and repeatedly bounced against the temple door, like ocean waves crashing on the beach. He could not bear separation from His beloved Jagannātha. Overwhelmed with ecstatic emotion, He ran fourteen miles to Brahmagiri to see a form of Lord Jagannātha known as Ālarnātha. While viewing the deity and being immersed in thoughts of the Lord, Caitanya Mahāprabhu became so ecstatic that when He offered prostrate obeisances in front of the deity, the stone melted beneath Him and now bears the imprint of His body. The Oriya script on the stone reads *sarbanga chinha*: "the entire body print."

Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, one of our foremost spiritual teachers and a contemporary of Lord Caitanya, writes, *paśu pākhī jhure, pāṣāna vidare, śuni' jāra guṇa-gāthā*: Lord Caitanya's chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa was so wonderful that birds and beasts danced and stones melted.

After Caitanya Mahāprabhu spent a few days visiting Ālarnātha, He came to know that two hundred devotees from Bengal, headed by Śrī Advaita Ācārya, had arrived in Puri. The Lord sent Svarūpa Dāmodara (His personal secretary) and Govinda (His attendant) ahead with garlands to receive the devotees at the holy lake of Narendra Sarovara. Seeing the devotees' intense enthusiasm, Pratāparudra, the king of Puri, was impressed and arranged the best of everything for their comfort. He wanted to please Śrī Caitanya by serving the devotees. [See sidebar: "King Pratāparudra and Lord Caitanya."]

When Mahāprabhu arrived, He embraced Śrī Advaita, greeted the others, and took everyone to the Jagannātha temple, where they performed *kīrtana* and danced enthusiastically in many groups. As the intensity of the *kīrtana* increased, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with transcendental emotion. His body erupted in symptoms of spiritual ecstasy. He jumped, rolled on the ground, and roared like thunder. Feeling intense separation from Kṛṣṇa, He shed torrents of tears. With many devotees surrounding Him, He danced jubilantly in various styles in front of Lord Jagannātha. This continued daily for a few days until Lord Jagannātha went into seclusion.

The Festival Begins

Rathayātrā day has a festive mood and charms the minds of the Lord's devotees. The route of the procession, Grand Road, is sprinkled with perfumes and auspicious sandalwood-infused water. Like a menial servant, the king of Puri sweeps the street with a golden-handled broom, observing a tradition thousands of years old. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Pratāparudra performing this humble service, He was greatly pleased.

As the procession began, seven *kīrtana* groups formed around Lord Jagannātha's chariot, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu expanded Himself into seven forms by His mystic power. He danced ecstatically in all groups simultaneously, but each group thought that Lord Caitanya was with them only, just as during Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance, each *gopī* thought that Kṛṣṇa was with her alone.

On seeing Jagannātha, Lord Caitanya displayed symptoms of spiritual ecstasy that intensified to hurricane strength.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu was seeing Lord Jagannātha for the first time since Jagannātha's seclusion. Lord Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, and His beauty is like the waves of an ocean of nectar. On seeing Lord Jagannātha, Lord Caitanya displayed symptoms of spiritual ecstasy that intensified to hurricane strength. He jumped high, ran in a circle like a wheel, and exhibited many transcendental changes in His body, including crying, perspiring, becoming stunned, and changing color. When He fell on the ground and rolled, He looked like a golden mountain. His dance astounded the devotees. Even Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā were extremely happy to see Him dancing, and they watched with unblinking eyes.

At one point, Lord Caitanya and some close associates went to rest in a nearby garden, and there He granted an audience to King Pratāparudra. During this time the procession stopped, and many devotees, of all backgrounds, offered food preparations to Lord Jagannātha.

A Show of Divine Strength

When the time came for the procession to proceed, Lord Jagannātha's chariot would not budge, despite the efforts of horses, elephants, powerful wrestlers, and thousands of people. When Śrī Caitanya returned from the garden, He gave His close associates the ropes used to pull the chariot, and He went behind and pushed with His head. The chariot rattled and began to roll. Everyone excitedly chanted, "All glories! All glories to Lord Jagannātha!"

Upon seeing the godly strength of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the people were struck with wonder. The king, his ministers, and his friends were so moved by ecstatic love that their hair stood on end.

Caitanya in the Mood of Rādhā

In His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Śrī Caitanya expresses the ecstatic mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa: "When will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your holy name?" During the Rathayātrā, Lord Caitanya exhibited the symptoms He longs for in this prayer. His dancing was a clear display of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's ecstatic mood upon seeing Her beloved Kṛṣṇa (Jagannātha). [See sidebar: "The Deep Significance of Rathayātrā."]

In the mood of Rādhārāṇī's highest ecstatic love, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu addressed Lord Jagannātha in the same way that Rādhā had spoken to Kṛṣṇa at Kurukshetra: "You are the same Kṛṣṇa, and I am the same Rādhārāṇī. We are meeting again in the same way that We met in the beginning of Our lives. Although We both are the same, My mind is still attracted to Vṛndāvana-dhāma. I wish that You will please appear again with Your lotus feet in Vṛndāvana."

In the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Caitanya sometimes went behind the chariot to test Lord Jagannātha's reciprocation: "Is Kṛṣṇa remembering Me? Does He care for Me? If so, then He will wait for Me and find out where I am."

Every time Lord Caitanya went behind the chariot, it stopped. And Lord Jagannātha waited, trying to see, "Where is Rādhā?"

"When I was away from Vṛndāvana," Lord Jagannātha conveyed to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, "I did not forget all the *gopīs,* especially You, My dear Rādhārāṇī."

Thus, both Caitanya and Jagannātha felt the exchange of ecstatic love. In the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at Kurukshetra lies the secret behind Lord Caitanya's role at Rathayātrā. Only a handful of intimate associates, such as Svarūpa Dāmodara and King Pratāparudra, could understand this.

Loving reciprocation with Lord Jagannātha made Lord Caitanya dance in ecstasy in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The interaction between the two Lords is intimate and confidential. Such are the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the form of Lord Caitanya and Lord Jagannātha. Lord Caitanya's ecstasy at Rathayātrā is limitless and beyond the material world.

Jaya Jagannātha! Jaya Caitanya Mahāprabhu!

Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa holds a master's degree in philosophy and religion and lives in New York City. His wife, Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī, graduated from Columbia University and co-authored this article.

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

NĀRADA MUNI TESTS DHRUVA

The sage Nārada tells prince Dhruva that he is too young to be successful in the difficult practice of mystic yoga.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 8

26 अहो तेजः क्षत्रियाणां मानभङ्गममृष्यताम्
बालोऽप्ययं हृदा धत्ते यत्समातुरसद्वचः

aho tejaḥ kṣatriyāṇāṁ
māna-bhaṅgam amṛṣyatām
bālo 'py ayaṁ hṛdā dhatte
yat samātur asad-vacaḥ

aho—how surprising it is; *tejaḥ*—power; *kṣatriyāṇām*—of the *kṣatriyas; māna-bhaṅgam*—hurting the prestige; *amṛṣyatām*—unable to tolerate; *bālaḥ*—only a child; *api*—although; *ayam*—this; *hṛdā*—at heart; *dhatte*—has taken; *yat*—that which; *sa-mātuḥ*—of the stepmother; *asat*—unpalatable; *vacaḥ*—words.

[Maitreya Muni said:] How wonderful are the powerful kṣatriyas. They cannot tolerate even a slight infringement upon their prestige. Just imagine! This boy is only a small child, yet harsh words from his stepmother proved unbearable to him.

PURPORT: The qualifications of the *kṣatriyas* are described in *Bhagavad-gītā.* Two important qualifications are to have a sense of prestige and not to flee from battle. It appears that the *kṣatriya* blood within the body of Dhruva Mahārāja was naturally very active. If the brahminical, *kṣatriya,* or *vaiśya* culture is maintained in a family, naturally the sons and grandsons inherit the spirit of the particular class. Therefore, according to the Vedic system, the *saṁskāra,* or the reformatory system, is maintained very rigidly. ① If one fails to observe the reformatory measures current in the family, one is immediately degraded to a lower standard of life.

नारद उवाच
27 नाधुनाप्यवमानं ते सम्मानं वापि पुत्रक
लक्षयामः कुमारस्य सक्तस्य क्रीडनादिषु

nārada uvāca
nādhunāpy avamānaṁ te
sammānaṁ vāpi putraka
lakṣayāmaḥ kumārasya
saktasya krīḍanādiṣu

(1) For *brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas,* and *vaiśyas,* what is the result of failing to observe the reformatory measures current in the family?

nāradaḥ uvāca—the great sage Nārada said; *na*—not; *adhunā*—just now; *api*—although; *avamānam*—insult; *te*—unto you; *sammānam*—offering respects; *vā*—or; *api*—certainly; *putraka*—my dear boy; *lakṣayāmaḥ*—I can see; *kumārasya*—of boys like you; *saktasya*—being attached; *krīḍana-ādiṣu*—to sports and frivolities.

The great sage Nārada told Dhruva: My dear boy, you are only a little boy whose attachment is to sports and other frivolities. Why are you so affected by words insulting your honor?

PURPORT: Ordinarily if a child is rebuked as a rascal or fool, he smiles and does not take such insulting words very seriously. Similarly, if words of honor are offered, he does not appreciate them. ② But in the case of Dhruva Mahārāja, the *kṣatriya* spirit was so strong that he could not tolerate a slight insult from his stepmother which injured his *kṣatriya* prestige.

28 विकल्पे विद्यमानेऽपि न ह्यसन्तोषहेतवः
पुंसो मोहमृते भिन्ना यल्लोके निजकर्मभिः

vikalpe vidyamāne 'pi
na hy asantoṣa-hetavaḥ
puṁso moham ṛte bhinnā
yal loke nija-karmabhiḥ

vikalpe—alternation; *vidyamāne api*—although there is; *na*—not; *hi*—certainly; *asantoṣa*—dissatisfaction; *hetavaḥ*—causes; *puṁsaḥ*—of the persons; *moham ṛte*—without being illusioned; *bhinnāḥ*—separated; *yat loke*—within this world; *nija-karmabhiḥ*—by his own work.

My dear Dhruva, if you feel that your sense of honor has been insulted, you still have no cause for dissatisfaction. This kind of dissatisfaction is another feature of the illusory energy; every living entity is controlled by his previous actions, and therefore there are different varieties of life for enjoying or suffering.

PURPORT: In the *Vedas* it is said that the living entity is always uncontaminated and unaffected by material association. The living entity gets different types of material bodies because of his previous fruitive actions. If, however, one understands the philosophy that as a living spirit soul he has an affinity for neither suffering nor enjoyment, then he is considered to be a liberated person. It is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.54), *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā:* when one is actually situated on the transcendental platform, he has nothing for which to lament and nothing for which to hanker. Nārada Ṛṣi first of all wanted to impress upon Dhruva Mahārāja that he was only a child; he should not have been affected by words of insult or honor. And if he were so developed as to understand honor and insult, then this understanding should have been applied in his own life; ③ he should have known that honor and dishonor are both destined only by one's previous actions; therefore one should not be sorry or happy under any circumstances.

(2) Why could Dhruva not tolerate a slight insult from his stepmother?
(3) What should Dhruva have known about honor and dishonor?
(4) When put into distress, how does a devotee respond?

29 परितुष्येत्ततस्तात तावन्मात्रेण पूरुषः
दैवोपसादितं यावद्वीक्ष्येश्वरगतिं बुधः

parituṣyet tatas tāta
tāvan-mātreṇa pūruṣaḥ
daivopasāditaṁ yāvad
vīkṣyeśvara-gatiṁ budhaḥ

parituṣyet—one should be satisfied; *tataḥ*—therefore; *tāta*—my dear boy; *tāvat*—up to such; *mātreṇa*—quality; *pūruṣaḥ*—a person; *daiva*—destiny; *upasāditam*—offered by; *yāvat*—as; *vīkṣya*—seeing; *īśvara-gatim*—the process of the Supreme; *budhaḥ*—one who is intelligent.

The process of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very wonderful. One who is intelligent should accept that process and be satisfied with whatever comes, favorable or unfavorable, by His supreme will.

PURPORT: The great sage Nārada instructed Dhruva Mahārāja that one should be satisfied in all circumstances. Everyone who is intelligent should know that because of our concept of bodily existence, we are subjected to suffering and enjoyment. One who is in the transcendental position, beyond the concept of bodily life, is considered to be intelligent. One who is a devotee especially accepts all reverses as gifts of the Supreme Lord. ④ When a devotee is put into distress, he accepts this as God's mercy and offers Him repeated obeisances with his body, mind and intellect. An intelligent person, therefore, should be always satisfied, depending on the mercy of the Lord.

30 अथ मात्रोपदिष्टेन योगेनावरुरुत्ससि
यत्प्रसादं स वै पुंसां दुराराध्यो मतो मम

atha mātropadiṣṭena
yogenāvarurutsasi
yat-prasādaṁ sa vai puṁsāṁ
durārādhyo mato mama

atha—therefore; *mātrā*—by your mother; *upadiṣṭena*—being instructed; *yogena*—by mystic meditation; *avarurutsasi*—want to elevate yourself; *yat-prasādam*—whose mercy; *saḥ*—that; *vai*—certainly; *puṁsām*—of the living entities; *durārādhyaḥ*—very difficult to perform; *mataḥ*—opinion; *mama*—my.

Now you have decided to undertake the mystic process of meditation under the instruction of your mother, just to achieve the mercy of the Lord, but in my opinion such austerities are not possible for any ordinary man. It is very difficult to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: The process of *bhakti-yoga* is simultaneously very difficult and very easy to perform. Śrī Nārada Muni, the supreme spiritual master, is testing Dhruva Mahārāja to see how determined he is to prosecute devotional service. This is the process of accepting a disciple. The great sage Nārada has come to Dhruva under the direction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead just to initiate him, yet he is testing Dhruva's determination to execute the process. ⑤ It is a fact, however, that for a sincere person devotional service is very easy. But for one who is not determined and sincere, this process is very difficult.

31 मुनयः पदवीं यस्य निःसङ्गेनोरुजन्मभिः
न विदुर्मृगयन्तोऽपि तीव्रयोगसमाधिना

munayaḥ padavīṁ yasya
niḥsaṅgenoru-janmabhiḥ
na vidur mṛgayanto 'pi
tīvra-yoga-samādhinā

munayaḥ—great sages; *padavīm*—path; *yasya*—whose; *niḥsaṅgena*—by detachment; *uru-janmabhiḥ*—after many births; *na*—never; *viduḥ*—understood; *mṛgayantaḥ*—searching for; *api*—certainly; *tīvra-yoga*—severe austerities; *samādhinā*—by trance.

Nārada Muni continued: After trying this process for many, many births and remaining unattached to material contamination, placing themselves continually in trance and executing many types of austerities, many mystic yogis were unable to find the end of the path of God realization.

32 अतो निवर्ततामेष निर्बन्धस्तव निष्फलः
यतिष्यति भवान् काले श्रेयसां समुपस्थिते

ato nivartatām eṣa
nirbandhas tava niṣphalaḥ
yatiṣyati bhavān kāle
śreyasāṁ samupasthite

ataḥ—hereafter; *nivartatām*—just stop yourself; *eṣaḥ*—this; *nirbandhaḥ*—determination; *tava*—your; *niṣphalaḥ*—without any result; *yatiṣyati*—in the future you should try; *bhavān*—yourself; *kāle*—in due course of time; *śreyasām*—opportunities; *samupasthite*—being present.

For this reason, my dear boy, you should not endeavor for this; it will not be successful. It is better that you go home. When you are grown up, by the mercy of the Lord you will get a chance for these mystic performances. At that time you may execute this function.

PURPORT: Generally, a thoroughly trained person takes to spiritual perfection at the end of his life. According to the Vedic system, therefore, life is divided into four stages. ⑥ In the beginning, one becomes a *brahmacārī,* a student who studies Vedic knowledge under the authoritative guidance of a spiritual master. He then becomes a householder and executes household duties according to the Vedic process. Then the householder becomes a *vānaprastha,* and gradually, when he is mature, he renounces household life and *vānaprastha* life also and takes to *sannyāsa,* completely devoting himself to devotional service.

Generally, people think that childhood is meant for enjoying life by engaging oneself in sports and play, youth is meant for enjoying the company of young girls, and when one becomes old, at the time of death, then he may try to execute devotional service or a mystic yoga process. But this conclusion is not for devotees who are actually serious. The great sage Nārada is instructing Dhruva just to test him. Actually, the direct order is that from any point of life one should begin rendering devotional service. ⑦ But it is the duty of the spiritual master to test the disciple to see how seriously he desires to execute devotional service. Then he may be initiated.

33 यस्य यद् दैवविहितं स तेन सुखदुःखयोः
आत्मानं तोषयन्देही तमसः पारमृच्छति

yasya yad daiva-vihitaṁ
sa tena sukha-duḥkhayoḥ
ātmānaṁ toṣayan dehī
tamasaḥ pāram ṛcchati

yasya—anyone; *yat*—that which; *daiva*—by destiny; *vihitam*—destined; *saḥ*—such a person; *tena*—by that; *sukha-duḥkhayoḥ*—happiness or distress; *ātmānam*—

(5) For whom is the process of devotional service easy, and for whom is it difficult?
(6) According to the Vedic system, what are the four stages of life?
(7) What must a guru do before initiating a prospective disciple?

one's self; *toṣayan*—being satisfied; *dehī*—an embodied soul; *tamasaḥ*—of the darkness; *pāram*—to the other side; *ṛcchati*—crosses.

One should try to keep himself satisfied in any condition of life—whether distress or happiness—which is offered by the supreme will. A person who endures in this way is able to cross over the darkness of nescience very easily.

PURPORT: Material existence consists of pious and impious fruitive activities. As long as one is engaged in any kind of activity other than devotional service, it will result in the happiness and distress of this material world. ⑧ When we enjoy life in so-called material happiness, it is to be understood that we are diminishing the resultant actions of our pious activities. ⑨ And when we are put into suffering, it is to be understood that we are diminishing the resultant actions of our impious activities. Instead of being attached to the circumstantial happiness and distress resulting from pious or impious activities, if we want to get out of the clutches of this nescience, then whatever position we are put in by the will of the Lord we should accept. Thus if we simply surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we shall get out of the clutches of this material existence.

34 गुणाधिकान्मुदं लिप्सेदनुक्रोशं गुणाधमात्
मैत्रीं समानादन्विच्छेन्न तापैरभिभूयते

guṇādhikān mudaṁ lipsed
anukrośaṁ guṇādhamāt
maitrīṁ samānād anvicchen
na tāpair abhibhūyate

guṇa-adhikāt—one who is more qualified; *mudam*—pleasure; *lipset*—one should feel; *anukrośam*—compassion; *guṇa-adhamāt*—one who is less qualified; *maitrīm*—friendship; *samānāt*—with an equal; *anvicchet*—one should desire; *na*—not; *tāpaiḥ*—by tribulation; *abhibhūyate*—becomes affected.

(8) How do we diminish the resultant actions of our pious activities?
(9) How do we diminish the resultant actions of our impious activities?
(10) How should a devotee act toward someone (a) more qualified than himself, (b) less qualified than himself, and (c) equal to himself?

Every man should act like this: when he meets a person more qualified than himself, he should be very pleased; when he meets someone less qualified than himself, he should be compassionate toward him; and when he meets someone equal to himself, he should make friendship with him. In this way one is never affected by the threefold miseries of this material world.

PURPORT: Generally when we find someone more qualified than ourselves, we become envious of him; when we find someone less qualified, we deride him; and when we find someone equal we become very proud of our activities. These are the causes of all material tribulations. The great sage Nārada therefore advised that a devotee should act perfectly. ⑩ Instead of being envious of a more qualified man, one should be jolly to receive him. Instead of being oppressive to a less qualified man, one should be compassionate toward him just to raise him to the proper standard. And when one meets an equal, instead of being proud of one's own activities before him, one should treat him as a friend. One should also have compassion for the people in general, who are suffering due to forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. These important functions will make one happy within this material world.

ध्रुव उवाच
35 सोऽयं शमो भगवता सुखदुःखहतात्मनाम्
दर्शितः कृपया पुंसां दुर्दर्शोऽस्मद्विधैस्तु यः

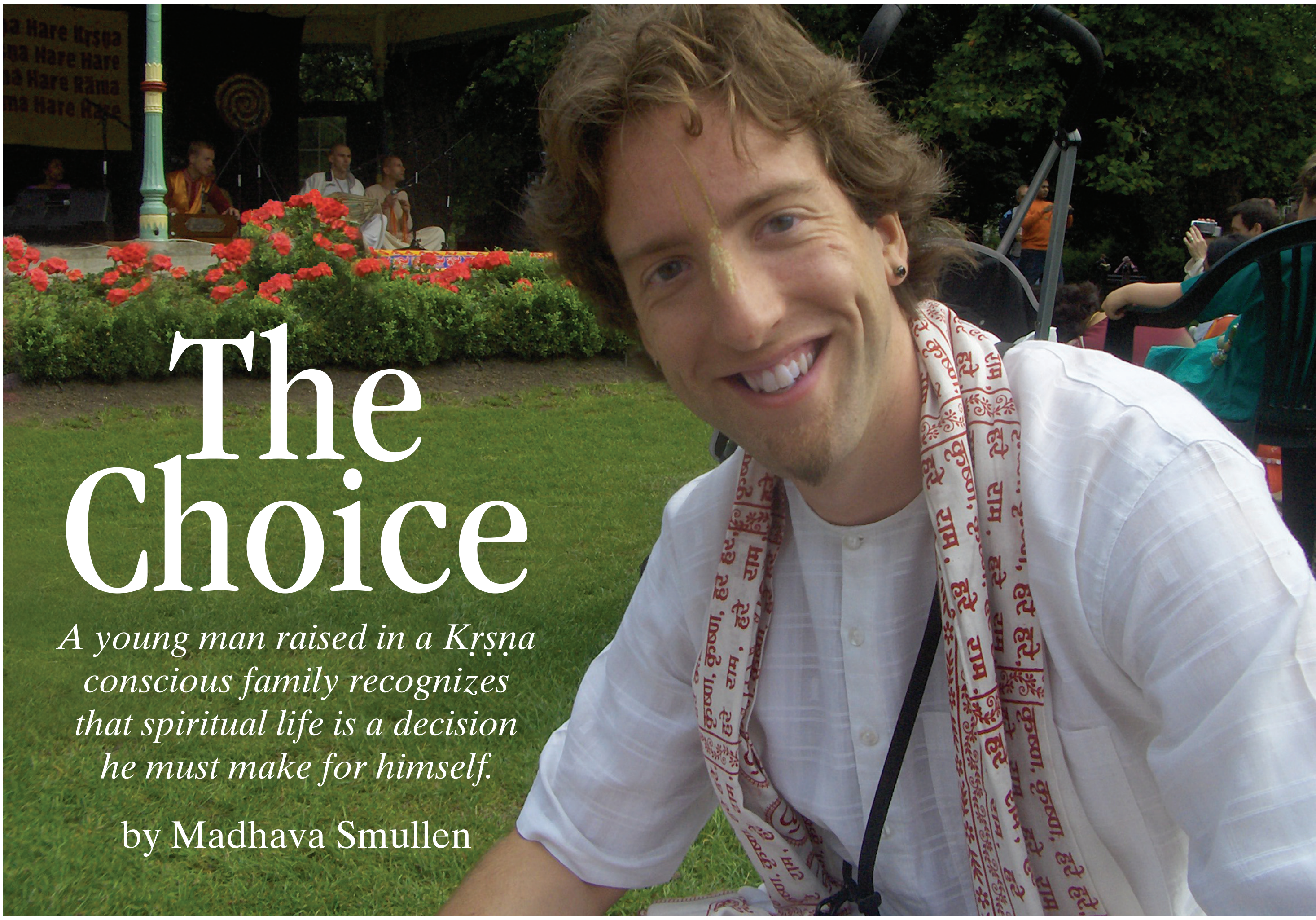
dhruva uvāca
so 'yaṁ śamo bhagavatā
sukha-duḥkha-hatātmanām
darśitaḥ kṛpayā puṁsāṁ
durdarśo 'smad-vidhais tu yaḥ

dhruvaḥ uvāca—Dhruva Mahārāja said; *saḥ*—that; *ayam*—this; *śamaḥ*—equilibrium of mind; *bhagavatā*—by Your Lordship; *sukha-duḥkha*—happiness and miseries; *hata-ātmanām*—those who are affected; *darśitaḥ*—shown; *kṛpayā*—by mercy; *puṁsām*—of the people; *durdarśaḥ*—very difficult to perceive; *asmat-vidhaiḥ*—by persons like us; *tu*—but; *yaḥ*—whatever you have said.

Dhruva Mahārāja said: My dear Lord Nāradajī, for a person whose heart is disturbed by the material conditions of happiness and distress, whatever you have so kindly explained for attainment of peace of mind is certainly a very good instruction. But as far as I am concerned, I am covered by ignorance, and this kind of philosophy does not touch my heart.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

Manjari Gauthier



The Choice

A young man raised in a Kṛṣṇa conscious family recognizes that spiritual life is a decision he must make for himself.

by Madhava Smullen

KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS is about who you are, who God is, and the relationship between you and God. But ultimately it's about a choice: Are you going to do something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness or not?

Until the day I left home at seventeen, I never got to make that choice. Someone else did it for me. I was born in Dublin, Ireland, to Kṛṣṇa devotees, and during my childhood Kṛṣṇa consciousness was not an inspired act of love and devotion from the heart. It was just something I was supposed to do, like going to school or eating my greens.

Faced with no choice, I was Kṛṣṇa conscious for all the wrong reasons. I did it to be a good boy. To impress my parents and teachers, I learned volumes of Sanskrit verses I didn't understand. I chanted Kṛṣṇa's names to compete with fellow students. Sure, I often enjoyed it. And no doubt those years were the basis for any time I turned to Kṛṣṇa later in life. But there was something ironic about shouting at a classmate, "In your face! I chanted nineteen rounds today, and you only chanted ten!"

When I left home for the Big City at seventeen and the choice was finally mine, I found myself turning to Kṛṣṇa for slightly better reasons. I say "slightly" because nothing leads a man to God better than a flat so small that you can sit in your office with your feet resting on your bed while you watch a pot on the stove. But still, there was something more genuine about my chanting. Now I did it because the world didn't make sense, or because I was lonely and needed a friend or some solace. It wasn't pure, because as Prabhupāda writes in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* I had "some aspiration to fulfill in exchange for devotional service." But at least I was taking refuge in Kṛṣṇa. I had made a start on the right path, as Kṛṣṇa Himself confirms: "O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute."

A Taste of the Real World

Then two things happened that drastically changed my view of the world.

At nineteen I packed my bags and set off to the west coast of the United States with two friends. It was my first major trip as an adult, and it was eye opening. I saw beautiful lakes, forests, and mountain ranges. I saw bustling, sometimes degenerated cities. And I met many interesting people from different backgrounds—to say the least.

One Mexican bum on an LA bus sat next to me and offered, "Hey man, joo wanna see what life on the streets is like? Look, here I get shot. Here someone stab me with a hunting knife. And here on my shoulder, another bullet wound."

It was mind-expanding.

So was what happened when I returned from my trip. I had hardly settled back into my routine life when my girlfriend at the time broke up with me.

A sort of panicked hunger for spiritual knowledge and closeness to God overcame me.

Suddenly I couldn't see things the way I used to anymore. The combination of a broadened experience of the world and understanding the temporary nature of relationships in it had shattered my worldview. I became overwhelmed with the thought that I and everyone I knew and loved would die and there was little time left to do something about my life.

A sort of panicked hunger for spiritual knowledge and closeness to God overcame me. I had a full-time job, but I chanted over twenty rounds of the *mahā-mantra* daily, sometimes chanting straight through my lunch break. On the bus to and from work, I read books on the eternity of the soul. I devoured the entire six-volume biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and it moved me in a way nothing has before or since. I kept a picture of Kṛṣṇa on my desk at work and often read transcripts of conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda during lulls. That got me into trouble more than once, but I didn't care. I had to find answers to quell my fears.

Death at the Door

Gradually life got easier. And as it did, being Kṛṣṇa conscious seemed less important. I continued to chant, but with less feeling and urgency.

Last year, Kṛṣṇa seemed to think I needed a reminder about what was important in life. Death came a-knockin'. He didn't get in, but he almost succeeded in breaking down the door. I found myself in a hospital with a burst appendix. A ball of infected pus had grown around it, and that was close to bursting too. If it had, the doctors told me, I'd be dead.

I spent a couple of intense weeks in the hospital, and when I emerged I was a different person. I remember the moment I first stepped out of those pale, clinical rooms and dark corridors and into brilliant sunshine. It was as if I was seeing every plant, every cloud in the sky, for the first time. When I spoke to people, I realized I really cared about them and their lives. And they could see that. Waving to death from across a hospital room had made me appreciate Kṛṣṇa's creation and His devotees far more.

But once again, as I recovered, my spiritual clarity faded.

Love, Not Fear

Now I realize that, while such cataclysmic life events can nudge you forward, they only last so long before they're gone again. Fear might make us look for solace, but it's no replacement for love.

Love is the key to being Kṛṣṇa conscious, and it doesn't come easy. It must be free of selfish motivation, as Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *The Way of Transcendence:* "Not that we say, 'My dear God, I love You because You supply me my daily bread.' Whether in the church, temple, or mosque, people offer the same kind of prayer. In India people go to a temple and pray, 'My dear Kṛṣṇa, I am in difficulty. Please get me out of it,' or 'I am in need of some money. Kindly give me a million dollars.' This is not love of God."

A Daily Choice

As I write these words, I am a long way from those childhood days of competition. I no longer feel that I have to please or impress anyone with my amazing practice of devotional service. And I am reasonably content, without any strong fear or desperate need for solace.

So why do I chant? There must be, deep down somewhere, a fragment of true love.

But it's only a fragment, barely visible. I still struggle to understand my relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and that choice still hangs over my head: Are you going to do something about it or not? With no one to make The Choice for me anymore, it's a question I have to ask myself every single day.

And that's what we have in common, you and I. You might not have grown up in Kṛṣṇa consciousness like me, but you've been on your own eventful journey, and it's led you here.

Tomorrow morning I'm going to rub the sleep out of my eyes, throw off my comforter, and ask myself a question. Consciously or unconsciously, there's a chance you're going to be doing the same thing.

Then I'm going to have to make a choice. I hope I make the right one.

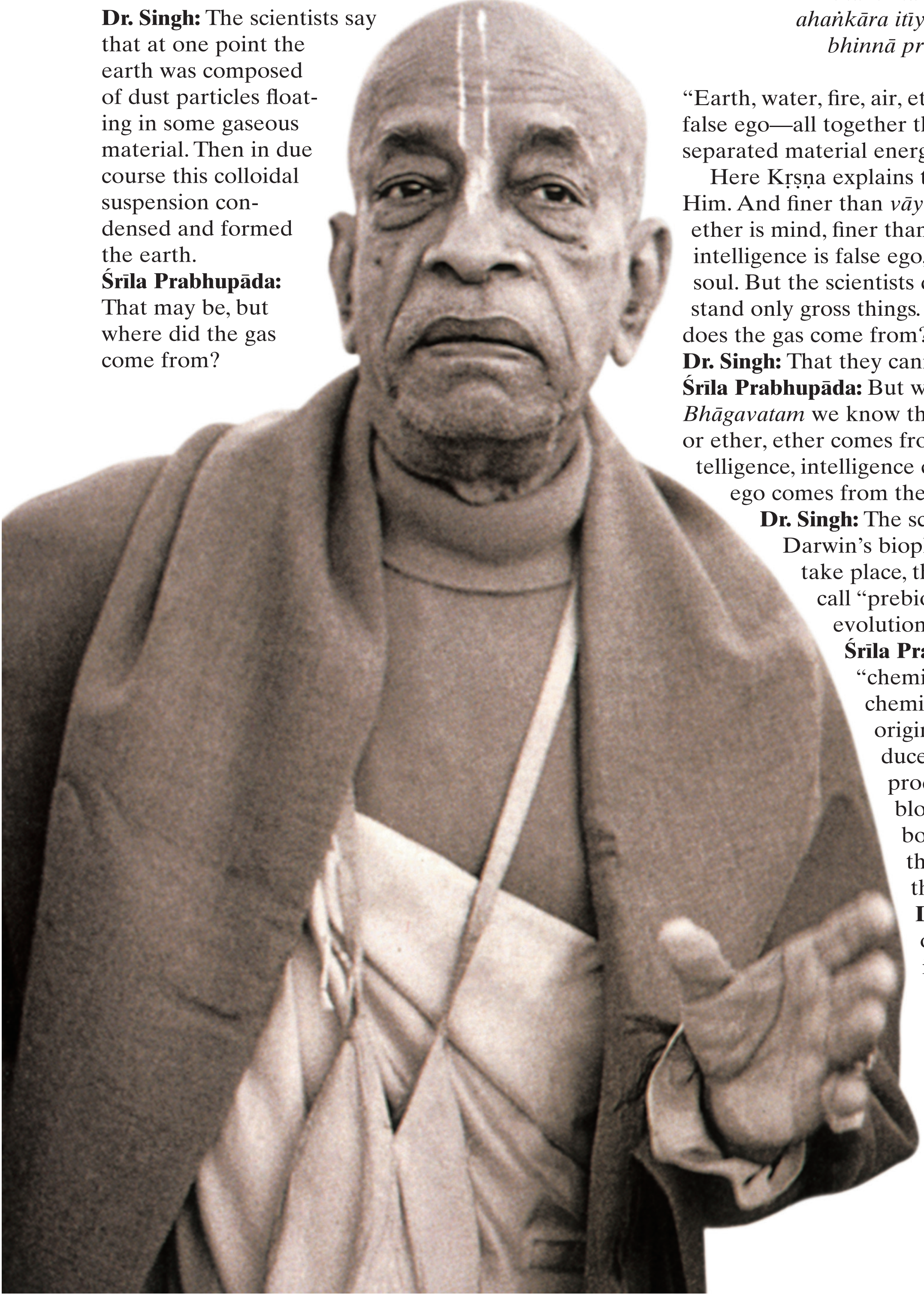
Will you? ❁

Madhava Smullen has worked as a freelance writer since the age of sixteen. He now writes for BTG, ISKCONnews.com, and Friends of the BBT. He is also working on his first novel, a supernatural thriller that features reincarnation as its central theme. He lives in Alachua, Florida.

Study the Origin First

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, a guest, and a disciple named Dr. Thoudam D. Singh (Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Swami) took place in December, 1973, during a morning walk at Venice Beach in Los Angeles.

Dr. Singh: The scientists say that at one point the earth was composed of dust particles floating in some gaseous material. Then in due course this colloidal suspension condensed and formed the earth.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: That may be, but where did the gas come from?



Dr. Singh: They say it just existed.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.4],

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego—all together these eight comprise My separated material energies."

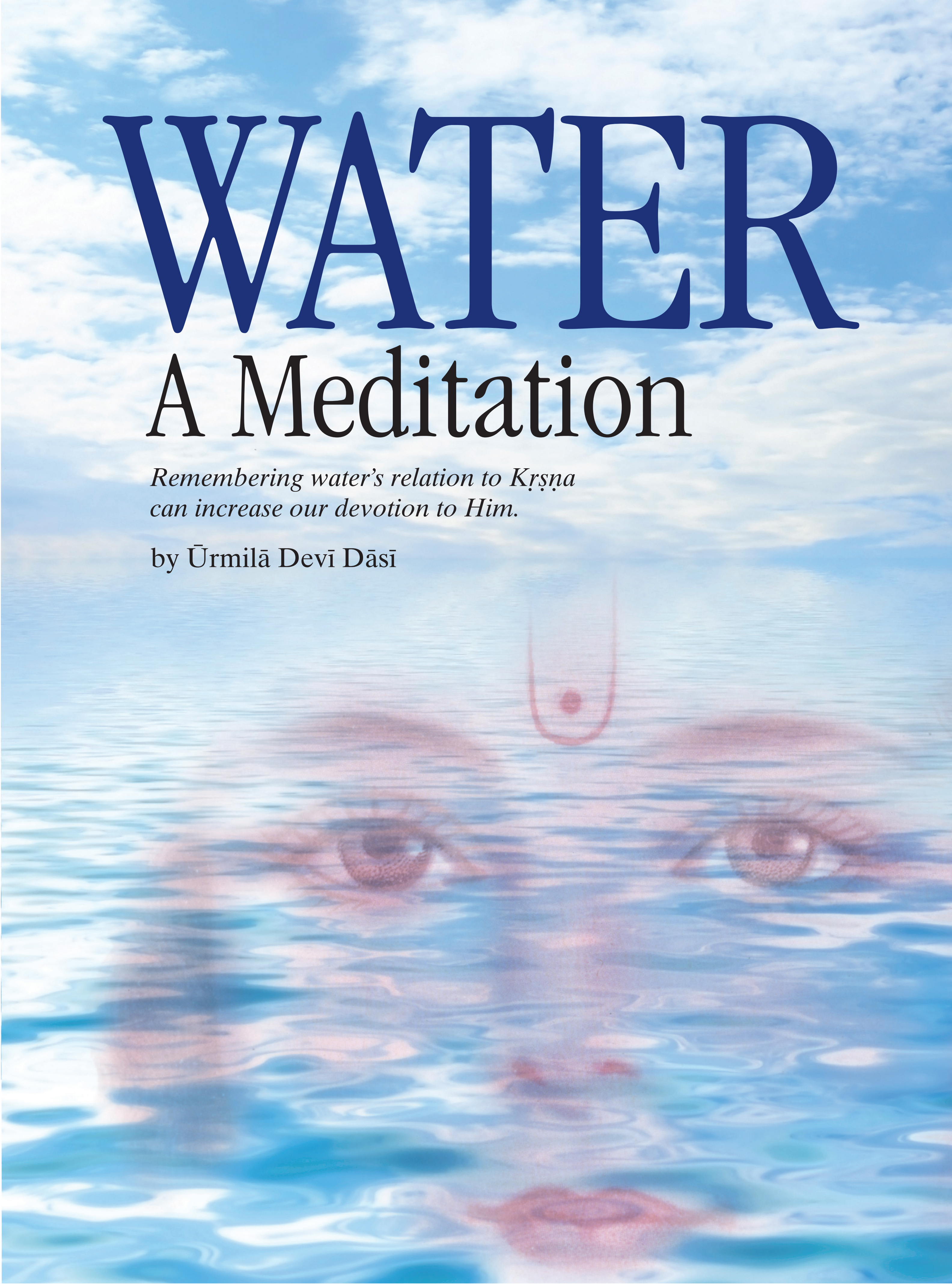
Here Kṛṣṇa explains that *vāyu* (gas) came from Him. And finer than *vāyu* is *kham* (ether), finer than ether is mind, finer than mind is intelligence, finer than intelligence is false ego, and finer than false ego is the soul. But the scientists do not know this. They understand only gross things. They mention gas, but where does the gas come from?
Dr. Singh: That they cannot answer.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: But we can answer. From the *Bhāgavatam* we know that gas has come from *kham,* or ether, ether comes from mind, mind comes from intelligence, intelligence comes from false ego, and false ego comes from the soul.
Dr. Singh: The scientists argue that before Darwin's biophysical type of evolution could take place, there had to be what they call "prebiotic chemistry," or chemical evolution.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. And the term "chemical evolution" means that chemicals have an origin, and that origin is spirit, or life. A lemon produces citric acid, and our bodies produce many chemicals in urine, blood, perspiration, and other bodily secretions. This is proof that life produces chemicals, not that chemicals produce life.
Dr. Singh: Scientists say that once the seed of life is present in the cells, then the living entity automatically develops and functions.
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, but who gives the seed? In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.10] Kṛṣṇa

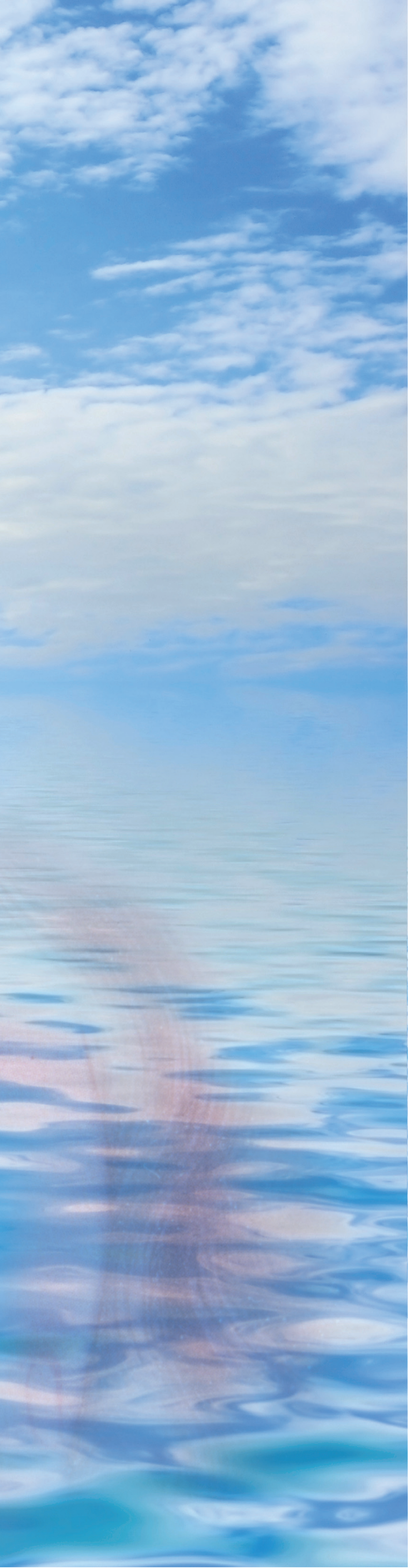
(*please turn to page 56*)

WATER
A Meditation

Remembering water's relation to Kṛṣṇa can increase our devotion to Him.

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī





Water and sky: © Elena Blokhina | Dreamstime.com. Montage: Yamarāja Dāsa

IN HAWAII, clear turquoise waves lapped at my knees while a multicolored sea turtle gently fed near my feet. It's the allure of water that draws people to that peaceful, beautiful spot, like so many places people go to relax and rejuvenate. Several months later in London, across two oceans from Hawaii, friends took me for exercise in an indoor heated pool. Although the sports club lacked beauty and the water was full of chemicals, my time in the water was still refreshing.

Water is one of the categories of Kṛṣṇa's energy, as described in scripture such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Brahma-saṁhitā.* Kṛṣṇa always exists as a transcendent person apart from His energy, while at the same time He is present in that energy. Therefore, while water is not Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is water.

In what ways can we appreciate Kṛṣṇa in water? He is the taste or the essence of water, the quality that quenches our thirst and brings satisfaction. As I swam in the London pool, I thought of the softness or liquidity of water. One of Kṛṣṇa's qualities is His softness. His spiritual body is so soft that it changes color where it has been brushed by a leaf. His soft body is a stimulus for His devotees' love for Him.

The scriptures describe that the Lord and His form are the same. So both His body and His sentiments are soft. Especially when Kṛṣṇa takes the mood of His chief devotee and appears as Lord Caitanya, His heart melts with compassion for all living beings, and He freely gives love of God without considering the merit of the candidate. His heart is, therefore, like melted butter, soft and fluid. The liquidity of water shows us this flowing and melting quality of the Lord's love and kindness.

Water is also powerful, so much so that its swift flow can provide all the electricity for a city, or one huge wave can create tremendous destruction in a moment. The power of water reminds us that one of Kṛṣṇa's opulences is unlimited strength. He creates, maintains, and destroys countless universes effortlessly. He carries planets on His head with such nonchalance that He is hardly aware of their weight. If all the potential and kinetic power of the entire world's water were combined into one gigantic wave, it would not equal the tiniest fraction of Kṛṣṇa's strength.

This dual nature of water—soft yet powerful—reminds us of how Kṛṣṇa, whose eternal spiritual form is that of a delicate sixteen-year-old boy, easily fought with and killed huge, muscular demons who were tormenting innocent citizens.

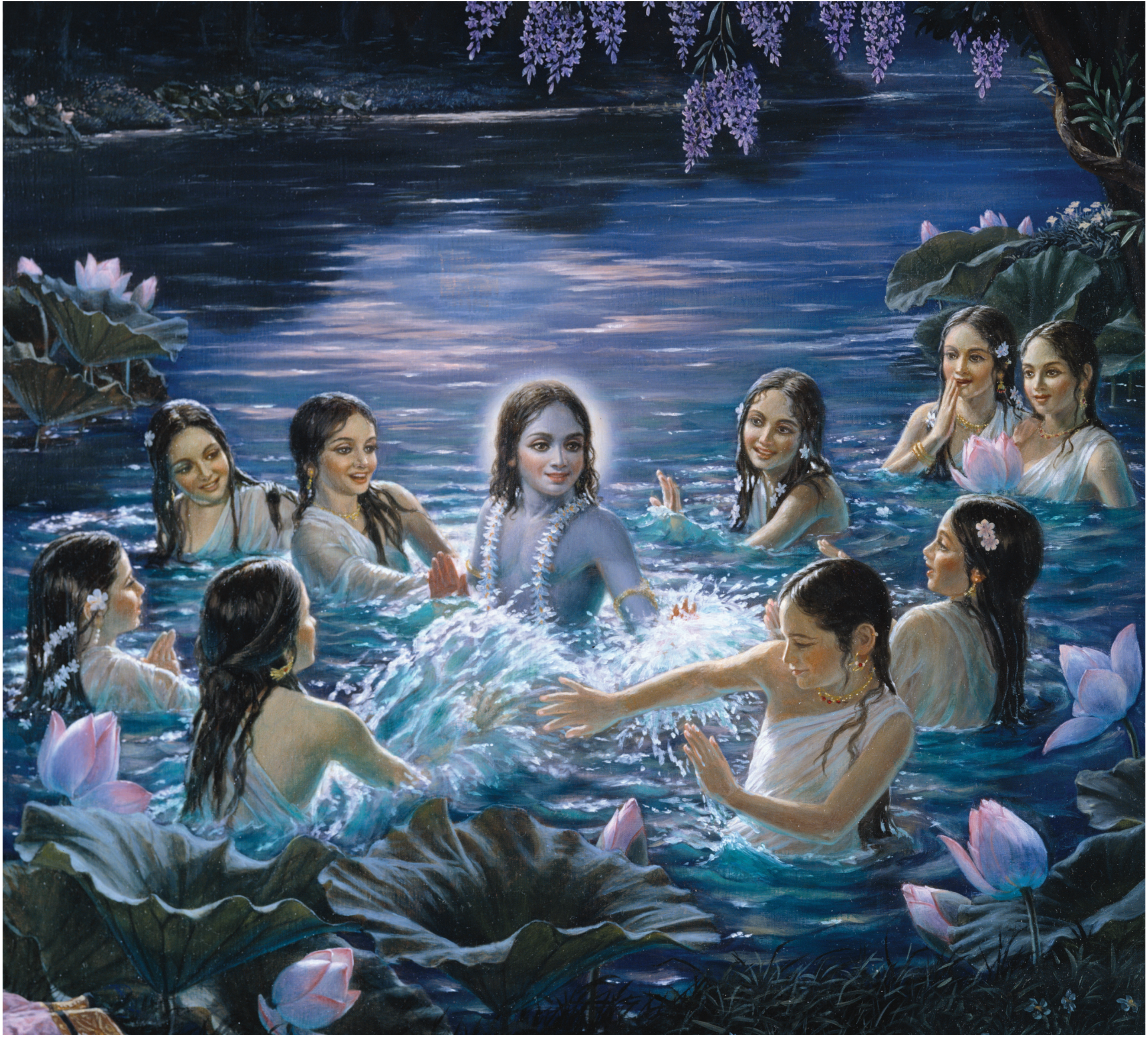
Water Pastimes

Many of the Lord's transcendental, spiritual activities relate to water. When Kṛṣṇa creates the material world, He assumes a form beyond measure lying in a yogic sleeplike trance on His incarnation the serpent Śeṣa, who floats on the causal ocean, which is alive and spiritual. Uncountable universes, one of which we now inhabit, come out of the Lord's body when He exhales.

Then the Lord enters each universe and creates from His perspiration an ocean that fills half the universal shell. He lies down in that water, and His consort the goddess of fortune massages His feet.

The Lord enjoys floating on this cosmic ocean with His consort. Because each of us is a small part of the Lord, we have His propensities to a minute degree. So the common human desire to float on a boat, raft, or other device with one's beloved comes from the Supreme, the source of everything.

Another example of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes involving water occurred early in universal history. In Vedic cosmology, planets are conscious persons. The planet Earth once fell into the universal water when demonic persons disturbed her orbit by drilling for oil and upsetting her balance. Celestial beings, called *devas,* who control the universe in service to Kṛṣṇa, wanted Earth to be



Detail from a painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

Lord Kṛṣṇa's most intimate pastimes include playing in the Yamuna River with the cowherd girls, His purest devotees.

rescued. Responding to their desire, the Lord came to save her. He assumed the form of a splendid, gigantic boar (Varāha), dove to the bottom of the universal ocean, picked up Earth, and gently carried her on His tusks to the water's surface. As He did so, a great demon challenged them. Lord Varāha then carefully placed fearful Earth on the water and gave her the ability to float. A fight between the Lord and the demon ensued within the great ocean. After defeating the demon, Lord Varāha returned to the spiritual sky.

Sometimes a flood devastates the universe, and Kṛṣṇa assumes the form of a golden fish to play in the water. Tied to a horn on His head is a boat carrying sages, Vedic knowledge, and seeds to replenish the world after the flood. During this pastime, Kṛṣṇa enjoys His play within the water as well as His loving relationship with the great sages.

Kṛṣṇa in His original form often sports in water with His friends and beloveds. For His water pastimes He chooses rivers such as the Ganges and Yamuna, who are also goddesses pure in love for Him. Kṛṣṇa also plays in lakes and ponds filled with lotuses and swans and surrounded by jeweled pavilions. These bodies of water are persons, devotees of His, alive with love and bliss.

Watering Our Devotion

Besides meditating on how water reminds us of Kṛṣṇa's qualities and pastimes, we can increase our awareness of Him when we use water in our everyday lives. For example, for basic health we need clean water for drinking and bathing, and we need it to cook and to clean our clothes and homes. We need the system Kṛṣṇa has set up for supplying clean water through evaporation and rain. At the very least, we should regularly thank the Lord for these gifts, which keep our bodies alive. Beyond that, we should be thankful for water as an impetus to remember Kṛṣṇa, because that remembrance will increase our service and love for Him, watering the plant of our devotion. ❁

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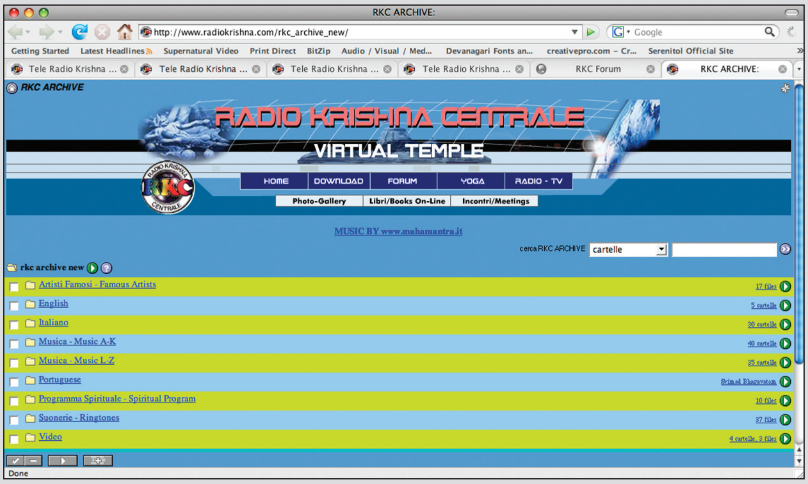
e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites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☐ Artisti Famosi - Famous Artists	17 files
☐ English	5 cartelle
☐ Italiano	30 cartelle
☐ Musica - Music A-K	40 cartelle
☐ Musica - Music L-Z	35 cartelle
☐ Portuguese	Srimad Bhagavatam
☐ Programma Spirituale - Spiritual Program	10 files
☐ Suonerie - Ringtones	37 files
☐ Video	4 cartelle, 3 files

Internet Radio—Internet radio allows you to listen to music, interviews, and other programming using your computer. Because you access the radio service using the Internet, you can hear radio stations your normal radio could never pick up.

Using a piece of free software called a media player, such as Winamp or iTunes, your computer becomes a radio set, bringing music and talk to your ears from around the world.

Radio Krishna Centrale, in Italy, is one Internet radio station that brings the transcendental sounds of *kīrtana* and *bhajana* into your home.

"We started to broadcast at the very beginning of the Internet era," says Gokula Tulasī Dāsa. "When Tridaṇḍi Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, started Radio Krishna Centrale, he immediately understood the great potential of the Internet to reach so many people all around the world."

"The purpose of this site is to spread transcendental knowledge," Gokula Tulasī says. "Gradually we have added video channels and other radio stations from all over the world, and now we have many thousands of listeners every day from around the globe."

Access Radio Krishna Centrale at **www.radiokrishna.com**.

KHQN Radio is a fulltime Hare Kṛṣṇa radio station operated by Cāru Dāsa from the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple in Utah (USA).

"I had a weekly radio show in Los Angeles called the Krishna Show. To rent time in Los Angeles is pricey, and it occurred to me that for the same amount we might be able to have a fulltime radio station somewhere else," Cāru Dāsa says.

Originally KHQN Radio was a standard radio station. Then around four years ago Cāru began to broadcast the channel on the Internet.

"One should have Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." Cāru says.

The format is about seventy-five percent music, twenty-five percent talk. The programs include a vegetarian show and serializations of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa.*

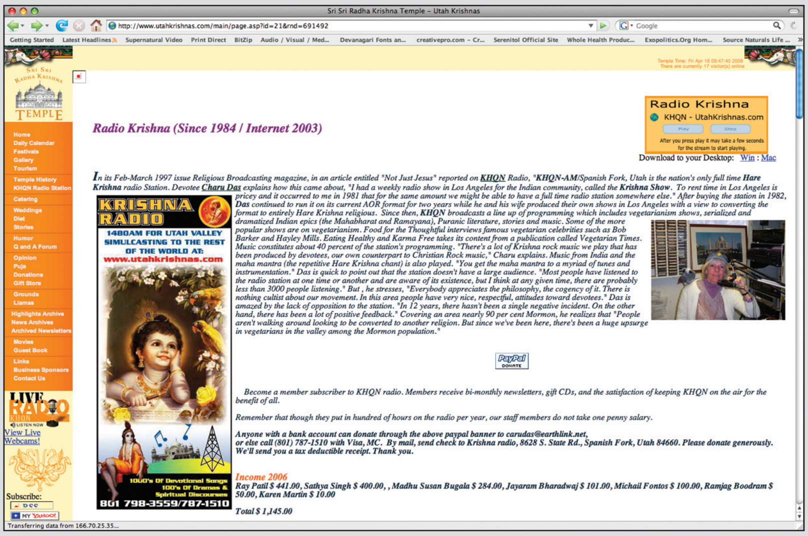
"We play a lot of Kṛṣṇa rock produced by devotees," Caru Dāsa says.

To access KHQN Radio, go to **www.utahkrishnas.com** and click on the "Live Radio" link.

Another Internet station is Kirtanradio.com, which bills itself as an "around the clock radio" where you can constantly hear your favorite *bhajanas* and *kīrtanas.* Kirtan Radio brings you music by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, His Holiness Indradyumna Swami, and Śrī Prahlāda Dāsa, among many others. According to Kirtan Radio the recordings "will make your heart melt."

Access Kirtan Radio at **www.kirtanradio.com**.

—Antony Brennan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Radio Krishna (Since 1984 / Internet 2003)

*In its Feb-March 1997 issue Religious Broadcasting magazine, in an article entitled "Not Just Jesus" reported on **KHQN** Radio, "**KHQN-AM**/Spanish Fork, Utah is the nation's only full time **Hare Krishna** radio Station. Devotee **Charu Das** explains how this came about, "I had a weekly radio show in Los Angeles for the Indian community, called the **Krishna Show**. To rent time in Los Angeles is pricey and it occurred to me in 1981 that for the same amount we might be able to have a full time radio station somewhere else." After buying the station in 1982, **Das** continued to run it on its current AOR format for two years while he and his wife produced their own shows in Los Angeles with a view to converting the format to entirely Hare Krishna religious. Since then, **KHQN** broadcasts a line up of programming which includes vegetarianism shows, serialized and dramatized Indian epics (the Mahabharat and Ramayana), Puranic literature, stories and music. Some of the more popular shows are on vegetarianism. Food for the Thoughtful interviews famous vegetarian celebrities such as Bob Barker and Hayley Mills. Eating Healthy and Karma Free takes its content from a publication called Vegetarian Times. Music constitutes about 40 percent of the station's programming. "There's a lot of Krishna rock music we play that has been produced by devotees, our own counterpart to Christian Rock music," Charu explains. Music from India and the maha mantra (the repetitive Hare Krishna chant) is also played. "You get the maha mantra to a myriad of tunes and instrumentation." Das is quick to point out that the station doesn't have a large audience. "Most people have listened to the radio station at one time or another and are aware of its existence, but I think at any given time, there are probably less than 3000 people listening." But , he stresses, "Everybody appreciates the philosophy, the cogency of it. There is nothing cultist about our movement. In this area people have very nice, respectful, attitudes toward devotees." Das is amazed by the lack of opposition to the station. "In 12 years, there hasn't been a single negative incident. On the other hand, there has been a lot of positive feedback." Covering an area nearly 90 per cent Mormon, he realizes that "People aren't walking around looking to be converted to another religion. But since we've been here, there's been a huge upsurge in vegetarians in the valley among the Mormon population."*

Become a member subscriber to KHQN radio. Members receive bi-monthly newsletters, gift CDs, and the satisfaction of keeping KHQN on the air for the benefit of all.

Remember that though they put in hundred of hours on the radio per year, our staff members do not take one penny salary.

Anyone with a bank account can donate through the above paypal banner to carudas@earthlink.net, or else call (801) 787-1510 with Visa, MC. By mail, send check to Krishna radio, 8628 S. State Rd., Spanish Fork, Utah 84660. Please donate generously. We'll send you a tax deductible receipt. Thank you.

Income 2006

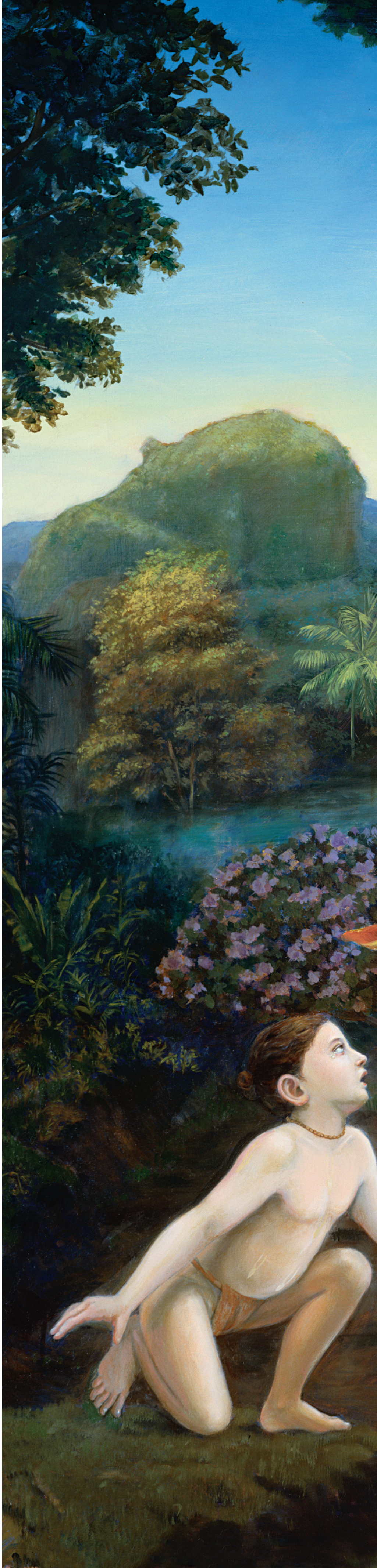
Ray Patil $ 441.00, Sathya Singh $ 400.00, , Madhu Susan Bugala $ 284.00, Jayaram Bharadwaj $ 101.00, Michail Fontos $ 100.00, Ramjag Boodram $ 50.00, Karen Martin $ 10.00

Total $ 1,145.00

Eyes to See GOD

Pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa enables His devotees to see Him directly.

by Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī



Purified by austerities, mantras, and meditation in bhakti-yoga, Dhruva Mahārāja attains the Lord's personal audience.

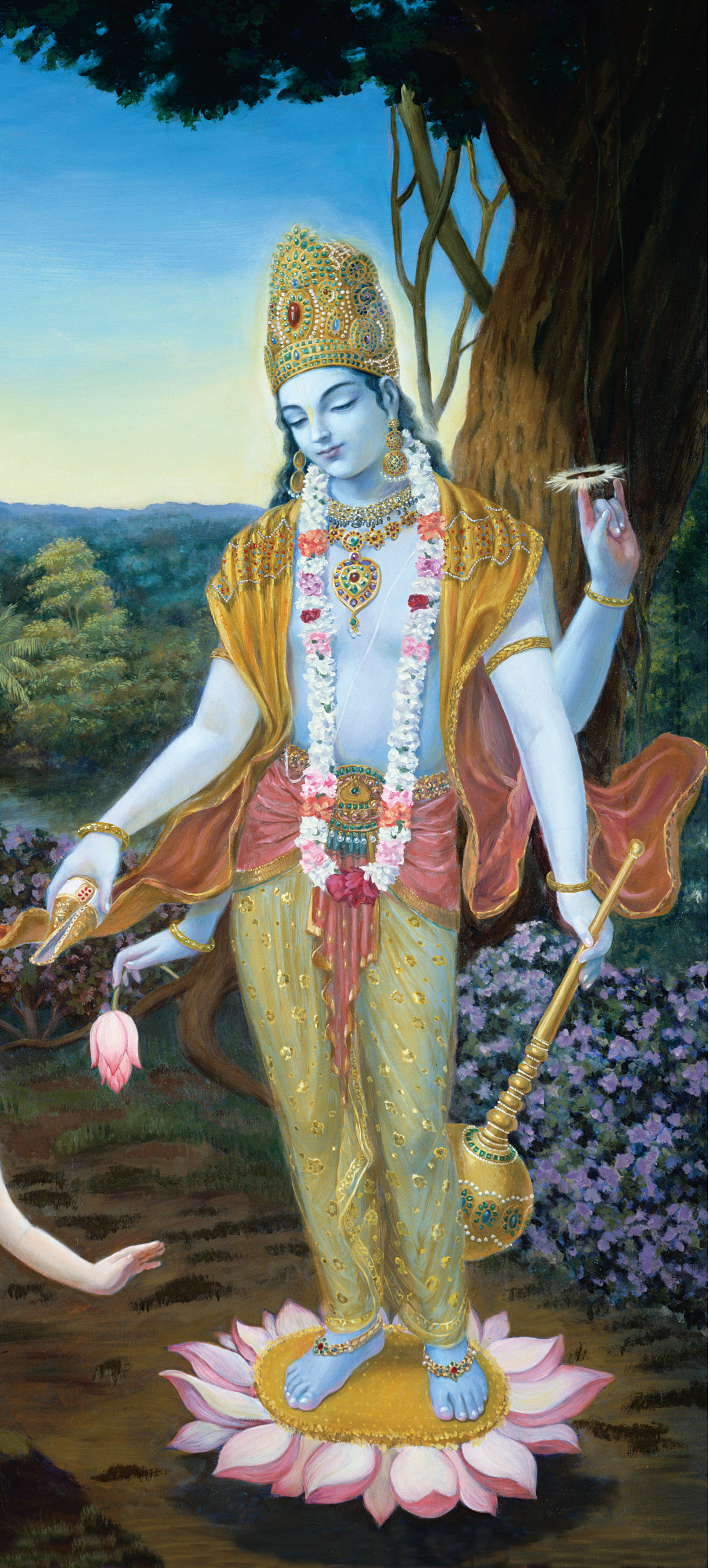
WHEN I WAS eight years old, my eyes strained to see what my teacher wrote on the blackboard. My mother brought me to an eye doctor, who prescribed glasses. Lenses in eyeglasses correct a physical imperfection by bending light. Scientists use more powerful lenses in microscopes and telescopes to "correct" their vision and enable them to see small or distant objects.

No lens technology will ever allow us to see Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. He is beyond our material senses. Since He is transcendental to the three modes of material nature (goodness, passion, and ignorance), no soul subjected to the interactions of the modes can see Kṛṣṇa and may be considered spiritually blind. Since this visual imperfection exists on a spiritual plane, the remedy must be spiritual. We can become eligible to see Kṛṣṇa only by performing devotional service under the proper guidance. As Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "Yes, you can see God—but first you have to have the eyes."

Spiritual Blindness

Sometimes people say that seeing is believing, and because they can't see God, they don't accept His existence. Śrīla Prabhupāda called atheistic people "spiritually blind—suffering from cataracts, ignorance." Ignorance is just like cataracts that cloud the eyes and prevent people from seeing the truth.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the spiritual blindness of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (who was also physically blind) prevented him and his sons from reaching an understanding with the Pāṇḍavas, who were all devotees of the Supreme Lord. Since Dhṛtarāṣṭra was a king, his spiritual blindness was also socially irresponsible, leading to the Kurukshetra War. His blindness affected his followers as well. As Śrīla Prabhupāda often quoted,



Painting by Dīrghā Devī Dāsī

"When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch."

Despite Dhṛtarāṣṭra's blindness, he had the opportunity to "see" the events on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra through the descriptions of Sañjaya, his secretary. Vyāsadeva had granted mystic vision to Sañjaya that allowed him to see the entire Kurukshetra War, including the discussion between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna known as *Bhagavad-gītā*. Unfortunately, however, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's spiritual blindness and his attachment to a wicked son prevented him from understanding Kṛṣṇa's teachings.

Like Dhṛtarāṣṭra, souls caught up in material nature are spiritually blind and can be cured only by surrendering to a bona fide spiritual master. Kṛṣṇa instructs in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34): "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." The blind cannot help the blind, but one who has the vision of transcendental knowledge can impart that "sight" to others. The Lord Himself has sanctioned this process, passed down directly from Him through the disciplic succession.

Just as a student who wants to learn medicine goes to an expert physician to study, an inquisitive person must go to a spiritual master to learn spiritual science. As Kṛṣṇa's representative, the spiritual master removes the blindness of the conditioned souls by giving the sight of true knowledge. Thus, we pray: *oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā / cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who with the torchlight of knowledge has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance." By imparting spiritual knowledge or vision, the spiritual master cures the blindness of material attachment.

The "darkness of ignorance" is ignorance of our constitutional position as spirit souls and our false identification with the body. A pure devotee fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, realizes that the body is temporary and stops differentiating living entities by body. Knowing all living beings to be parts of Kṛṣṇa, the learned sage “sees with equal vision a learned and gentle *brāhmaṇa,* a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater.” (Bg. 5.18) Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that this spiritual perspective—to see the soul beyond the body—is the “vision of eternity.” (Bg. 13.32)

Since living entities are constitutionally related to Kṛṣṇa, devotees who advance in the spirit of loving service eventually become qualified to see Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is *nayana-abhirāmam*, very pleasing to the eyes. He is supreme in beauty, one of the six main opulences (beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, and renunciation). The sight of Kṛṣṇa is a priceless gift that surpasses everything.

Seeing Kṛṣṇa is so purifying that even the demons He killed achieved liberation.

When Kṛṣṇa was present on earth, He granted that blessing to many living entities, but not everyone saw Him in the same way. Kṛṣṇa explains: “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.” (Bg. 4.11) So some could see Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord, while others saw Him as an ordinary person—a simple cowherd boy, the envoy of the Pāṇḍavas, or the humble charioteer of Arjuna. He revealed His universal form on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, but that vision was granted to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa’s great devotee and dear friend. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes Arjuna as having “transcendental eyes” because of his devotion to the Lord. (Bg. 11.54, Purport)

Kṛṣṇa is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha,* the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Pure devotees see Him as He is and interact with Him in different moods according to their natural tendency. Blinded by ignorance, the materially contaminated and demoniac cannot perceive Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy. Kṛṣṇa says of them: “Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form. They do not know My transcendental nature and My supreme dominion over all that be.” (Bg. 9.11) Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that those who were able to see Kṛṣṇa’s original form were able to go back with Him to His kingdom but those “who were unable to see the Lord as He is remained attached to material hankerings” and the material cycle of birth and death. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.11, Purport)

On the other hand, seeing Kṛṣṇa is so purifying that even the demons He killed achieved liberation. After Kṛṣṇa’s departure Uddhava told Vidura that all those who saw Kṛṣṇa’s face on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra—regardless of which side they fought on—achieved Kṛṣṇa’s abode after death. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.20) *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.1.164) states that one’s life becomes successful by seeing the Lord.

Achieving the Most Precious Gem

Ultimately, the opportunity to see Kṛṣṇa depends on Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, attained by pleasing Him through devotional service. The Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives the important example of Kṛṣṇa’s favoring the child Dhruva with His audience. The story shows how devotional service purifies those who practice it and changes their material desires into transcendental realization.

Dhruva’s father, King Uttānapāda, was the emperor of the world and had two queens, Suruci and Sunīti. As a child, Dhruva wanted to sit on his father’s lap, but his stepmother, Suruci, the king’s favorite queen, told Dhruva that he was not qualified to sit on the throne or lap of the king because he was not born from her womb. She informed him that he was “trying to fulfill a desire which is impossible to fulfill.” Because she was the king’s favorite queen, she became proud of her position, at the expense of others.

Dhruva’s mother, Sunīti, consoled her son and advised him to worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord to fulfill his desire. Somewhat sarcastically, Suruci had given Dhruva a similar instruction. Therefore, Dhruva went to the forest and performed many austerities to achieve the Lord’s favor.

The sage Nārada arrived and became Dhruva’s spiritual master. Dhruva asked how to achieve a greater position than anyone else, even his father, the emperor of the world, or his grandfather, Lord Brahmā. To fulfill this seemingly impossible demand, Nārada Muni recommended that Dhruva become absorbed in devotional service, especially in a holy place. He directed Dhruva to Madhuvana, one of the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana, on the bank of the Yamuna River. Nārada then described the beautiful bodily features of the Lord and told Dhruva to meditate upon the Lord sitting in his heart, a process that would purify his consciousness. He also gave Dhruva a mantra to glorify the Lord and requested that he worship a simple deity with fruits, flowers, and *tulasī* leaves.

Dhruva followed Nārada Muni’s instructions perfectly and eventually “captured the Supreme Personality of Godhead” by his devotion. Although Dhruva was a young boy, his austerities were so severe that the *devas,* who manage the material world, approached the Supreme Lord in distress because they worried that the universe would become imbalanced. The Lord pacified them, saying He would stop the boy’s austerities.

Meanwhile, Dhruva Mahārāja continued his meditation upon the form of the Lord in his heart. Suddenly, that form disappeared, and Dhruva's intense concentration broke. He opened his eyes and saw the Lord Himself standing directly in front of him.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.9.3) describes the intensity of this *darśana* (audience): "Dhruva Mahārāja, in ecstasy, looked upon the Lord as if he were drinking the Lord with his eyes, kissing the lotus feet of the Lord with his mouth, and embracing the Lord with his arms." He wanted to offer prayers but was inexperienced, so the Lord blessed him by touching His conch shell to Dhruva's forehead. Dhruva thus received the conclusion of all Vedic knowledge and was able to glorify the Lord properly.

Dhruva Maharaja's *darśana* of the Lord was just like seeing a rare and precious gem. The material desires that had originally inspired his performance of austerities seemed unimportant compared to pure devotion. Now understanding the real purpose of his life, he felt remorseful for having prayed for "such useless things" as a kingdom and prestige. In *On the Way to Kṛṣṇa*, Śrīla Prabhupāda cites a verse from the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (7.28) that quotes Dhruva Mahārāja's words to the Lord: "I was undergoing such severe penances simply for my father's kingdom and land, but now I have seen You. Even the great sages and saints cannot see You. What is my profit? I left my home to find merely some scraps of glass and rubbish, and instead I have found a very valuable diamond. Now I am satisfied. I have no need to ask anything of You." Audience with the Lord is just like a precious jewel compared to "glass and rubbish" material desires the conditioned souls consider their ultimate goal. Searching after trifles instead of true value illustrates the blindness of materialism.

Dhruva Mahārāja's devotional service cured his spiritual blindness, and the Lord blessed him by appearing before Him. Even though Dhruva's original desire was material, devotional service under the guidance of his spiritual master purified him and qualified him to see the Lord. Because of Dhruva's pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he became fully satisfied just by seeing the Lord.

Seeing God Now

Pure devotees of the Lord possess transcendental vision that allows them to always see Kṛṣṇa. According to *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.38): "Those who are in the ecstasy of love with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śyāmasundara (Kṛṣṇa), see Him always in their hearts due to love and devotional service rendered to the Lord."

This kind of vision requires purity of devotion, which is rare, but even neophyte devotees can appreciate Kṛṣṇa's form in a different way. Since Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to our material senses, He cannot be seen with our present eyes. To aid the devotional progress of His devotees, however, He appears in the deity form in the temple. Although material senses perceive the form as made of stone, metal, wood, or paint, the deity, or *arcā-mūrti,* is an actual form of the Lord. The *arcā-mūrti* is neither an idol nor a symbol, but the Lord Himself, who shows Himself so that anyone can see Him. Out of His mercy He appears in this way and reveals Himself according to the devotee's degree of surrender. The ability to see Him reflects "the proportion to which our lives are freed from sins," as Śrīla Prabhupāda explains. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.17, Purport) In other words, our ability to see Kṛṣṇa reflects the degree of our immersion in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thus, devotees pray to the deity of Lord Jagannātha (Kṛṣṇa) for the spiritual vision to see His true form: *jagannātha-svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*—"O Lord of the Universe, kindly reveal Yourself to me." It might seem ironic that a devotee standing in front of Jagannātha asks to see Him, but the prayer

BACK TO GODHEAD

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really asks for the spiritual vision to see the Lord properly.

Since the deity and Kṛṣṇa are the same, His appearance in the deity form has the same purpose as His own appearance. Kṛṣṇa descends millennium after millennium "to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants" (Bg. 4.8), which means He appears to kill the demons and give pleasure to the devotees. Similarly, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 20.219) explains, *sarvatra prakāśa tāñra—bhakte sukha dite/ jagatera adharma nāśi' dharma sthāpite:* "The Lord is situated in all the universes in different forms just to please His devotees. Thus the Lord destroys irreligious principles and establishes religious principles."

Our senses may be imperfect and materially contaminated, but they will be purified by devotional service to the Lord, as shown by Dhruva Mahārāja's example. Devotional service means engaging all of our senses in the service of the Lord to gradually purify them. Śrīla Prabhupāda recommends that the eyes "should not be allowed to see anything but the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa." (Bg. 13.8–12, Purport). Kṛṣṇa is called Govinda—He who enlivens the cows and the senses. In response to our spiritual determination and our devotional service to Him, He will grant us the transcendental ability to see Him face to face. That's something we can never hope to achieve with the corrective lenses of eyeglasses, microscopes, or telescopes. ❁

Mohinī Rādhā Devī Dāsī graduated from Columbia University with a degree in English literature in 2004. She is a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and lives with her husband, Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa, in New York City.

LETTERS

(*continued from page 5*)

disease of material life. We should try not to commit offenses, one of which is inattentiveness. *Japa* time is for associating only with Kṛṣṇa, not with your problems. Kṛṣṇa will take care of those things in time. Try to just listen to the holy names and pray to Kṛṣṇa for increased service, for acceptance back into His loving service.

Chant every day. Constant practice trains our minds and increases our awareness of Kṛṣṇa. So stick to it, have faith, and pray to Kṛṣṇa to help you think of Him and depend on Him. This is the gradual process of surrender that begins with the chanting of His holy names. It is the real cure. ❁

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Yamarāja Dāsa

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with "drama")

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HOW TO LOVE EVERYONE

(*continued from page 8*)

expended. The complete supply will remain.

I am very glad to see you in this temple. Please try to understand the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have books to explain it, and at the same time we have the simple method, chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, in which even a small child can take part. The most erudite scholar can take part, and an innocent child who has no education and no literary sense can equally take part. Both of them can take the same advantage. A small child who comes before the deity and dances and claps is getting the result. Don't think that it is in vain. Whether a child or an adult touches fire, its action will be there equally. Similarly, anyone who comes into this temple, offers obeisances, takes a little *prasādam,* joins with the chanting, and hears some talks will be benefited spiritually. That is our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Thank you very much.

STUDY THE ORIGIN FIRST

(*continued from page 45*)

answers this question. *Bījaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ viddhi pārtha sanātanam:* "O son of Pṛthā, know that I am the original seed of all existences." And later [14.4] Kṛṣṇa says,

> *sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya*
> *mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ*
> *tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir*
> *ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā*

"It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kuntī, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father."

Dr. Wolf-Rottkay: But in all humility, Śrīla Prabhupāda, suppose the scientists actually succeed in artificially creating a living organism, or even a living cell. What would you say?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What would be their credit? They would only be imitating what already exists in nature. People are very fond of imitations. If a man in a nightclub imitates a dog, people will go and pay money to watch him. But when they see a real dog barking, they don't pay any attention to it.

Dr. Singh: Śrīla Prabhupāda, the idea of chemical evolution came from a Russian biologist in 1920. He demonstrated that before biochemical evolution, the earth's atmosphere was in a state of reduction. In other words, it was mostly full of hydrogen, with very little oxygen. Then, in due course, the sun's radiation caused these hydrogen molecules to form into different chemicals.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: This is a side study. First of all, where did the hydrogen come from? The scientists simply study the middle of the process; they do not study the origin. We must know the beginning. There is an airplane. [Śrīla Prabhupāda indicates an airplane appearing on the horizon.] Would you say the origin of that machine is the sea? A foolish person might say that all of a sudden a light appeared in the sea and that's how the airplane was created. But is that a scientific explanation? The scientists' explanations are similar. They say, "This existed, and then all of a sudden, by chance, that occurred." This is not science. Science means to explain the original cause.

Perhaps the scientists can create imitations of nature, but why should we give them credit? We should give credit to the original creator, God; that is our philosophy.

Dr. Singh: When a scientist discovers some natural law, he usually names it after himself.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, exactly. The law is already there in nature, but the rascal wants to take credit for it.

Dr. Singh: They are actually fighting against the laws of nature, but often they take a certain kind of pleasure in the struggle.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That pleasure is childish. Suppose a child builds a sand castle on the beach with great effort. He may take pleasure in it, but that is childish pleasure. That is not a grown man's pleasure. Materialistic men have created a standard of false happiness. They have created a gorgeous arrangement for maintaining a comfortable civilization, but it is all false because they cannot create a situation in which they will be able to enjoy it permanently. At any moment, anyone can be kicked out by death, and all his enjoyment will be finished.

Dr. Singh: That is why they say that God hasn't given us everything—because we are not able to live here forever.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But God has given them everything necessary to live peacefully, and everything necessary to understand Him. So why will they not inquire about God? Instead, they do things that help them forget God.

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Ekaterinburg — 620078, G. Ekaterinburg, per. Otdelniy 5DK VOG/ Tel. +7 (3432) 74-2200 or 49-5262
Irkutsk — St. Krimskaya 6A/ Tel. (3952) 38-71-32 or 3240-62/ irkutsk@cis.pamho.net
Kazan — 13, Sortirovochnaya St. pos.Yudino/ Tel. +7 (8432) 55-2529 or 42-9991
Krasnodar — 418, Stepnaya St., selo Elizavetinskoye, Krsnodarski krai/ Tel. +7 (8612) 50-1694
Kurjinovo — 8, Shosseinaya St., pos. Ershovo, Urupski region, Karachayevo-Cherkessia
Moscow — 8/3, Khoroshevskoye sh. (mail: P.O. Box 69), 125284/ Tel. +7 (095) 255-6711/ Tel. & fax: +7 (095) 945-3317
Moscow — Nekrasovsky pos., Dmitrovsky reg., 141700/ Tel. +7 (095) 577-8543, -8601, or -8775/ Fax: +7 (095) 446-4746
Murmansk — 16, Frolova St. (mail: P.O. Box 5823)/ Tel. +7 (8152) 58-9284/ upendra@mun.rospac.ru
Nijny Novgorod — 14b, Chernigovskaya St., 603001/ Tel. +7 (8312) 30-5197 or 25-2592
Novorossiysk — 117, Shillerovskaya St./ Tel. +7 (86134) 38-926 or 51-415
Novosibirsk —18/2 Kholodilynaya St., 630001/ Tel. +7 (3832) 46-2655 or -2666
Omsk — 664099, 42 10th Severnaya St. (mail: P.O. Box 8741)/ Tel. +7 (3812) 24-5310 or 41-4051
Perm — 76, Generala Chernyakhovskogo, 614000/ Tel. +7 (342) 2755002 or 2260681/ prema.vardhana.das@cis.pamho.net
Rostov-Na-Donu — 84/1, Saryana St., 344025 (mail: P.O. Box 64, 344007)/ Tel. & fax: +7 (8632) 51-0456
Samara — 122, Aeroportovskoye sh., Zubchininovka/ Tel. +7 (8462) 97-0318 or -0323
Simbirsk — 10, Glinki St., 432002/ Tel. +7 (8422) 21-4016
Sochi — 81a, Lesnaya St., Bytha/ Tel. +7 (8622) 98-5639/ Tel. & fax: +7 (8622) 97-2483
Ulan-Ude — Prirechnaya St. 23, 670013 (mail: P.O. Box 4268, 670000)/ Tel. +7 (3012) 30-795/ ulan.ude@cis.pamho.net
Vladimir — Ul. Nikolo-Galeyskaya 56/25, 60000/ Tel. +7 (0922) 32-6726
Vladivostok — Pikhtovaya St., 33/ Tel. +7 (4232) 35-30-26/ nram@list.ru

RESTAURANTS

Ekaterinburg — Sankirtana, 33 Bardina St./ Tel. +7 (3432) 41-2737
St. Petersburg — Govinda's, 58, Angliysky pr., 190008/ Tel. +7 (812) 113-7896
Vladivostok — Vedic Cuisine, 12, Oleansky pr./ Tel. +7 (4232) 26-89-43/ nram@list.ru

UKRAINE

Dnepropetrovsk — Spusk Kalininskiy 39, 320038/ Tel. +380 (0562) 42-3631 or 45-4709/ madan_gopal_psm@mail.ru
Donetsk — 22, Rubensa St., Makeyevka 339018/ Tel. +380 (0622) 94-9104 or -3140/ premada@iskcon.donetsk.ua
Kharkov — 43, Verknegievskaya St., Holodnaya Gora, 310015/ Tel. +380 (0572) 20-2167 or 72-6869/ kharkov@cis.pamho.net
Kiev — 21V, Dmitrievskaya ap.13, 01054/ Tel. +380 (044) 484-4042 or 482-1041/ Tel. & fax +380 (044) 484-0934
Kiev — 16, Zoryany pereulok. 04078/ Tel. +380 (044) 433-8312, or 434-7028 or -5533
Nikolaev — 5-8, Sudostroitelny per., 327052/ Tel. +380 (0510) 35-1734
Vinnica — 5, Chkalov St., 28601/ Tel. +380 (0432) 32-3152

OTHER COUNTRIES

Baku, Azerbaijan — 2, Zardobi per., Uzbekistan St., pos. 8th km. 370060/ Tel. +994 (12) 21-2376
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan — 5, Omsky per., 720007/ Tel. +7 (3312) 24-2230 or 44-3776
Dushanbe, Tajikistan — 38, Anzob St., 734001/ Tel. +7 (3772) 27-1920 or -3990/ gurupriya@cada.tajik.net
Kishinev, Moldova — 13, A. Popovich St., 277022/ Tel. +373 (2) 55-8099 or 76-9254
Minsk, Belarus — 11, Pavlova St., 220053/ Tel. +375 (17) 288-06-29/ new.jaipur@cis.pamho.net
Sukhumi, Georgia — St. Pr-t Mira d 274/ Tel. +995 (8122) 2-9954
Tashkent, Uzbekistan — 54, A. Kodirov St., Mirabad Tumani, 700005/ Tel. & fax: +998 (371) 2918501/ tashkentmandir@mail.ru
Tbilisi, Georgia — 16, Kacharava St., Avchalskoye sh., 380053/ Tel. +995 (32) 62-3326 or 98-5812

RESTAURANT

Almaty, Kazakhstan — Govinda's, 39 Ablay Khan Avenue, Almaty City 050004/ Tel. +7 (327) 271-0836/ Fax: +7 (327) 271-3235/ almaty@pamho.net

AUSTRALASIA

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide — 25 Le Hunte St. (mail: P.O. Box 114, Kilburn, SA 5084)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (08) 8359-5120/ iskconsa@tpg.com.au
Brisbane — 95 Bank Rd., Graceville (mail: P.O. Box 83, Indooroopilly), QLD 4068/ Tel. +61 (07) 3379-5455/ Fax: +61 (07) 3379-5880/ brisbane@iskcon.org.au
Canberra — 1 Quick St., Ainslie, ACT 2602 (mail: P.O. Box 1411, Canberra, ACT 2601)/ Tel. & fax: +61 (02) 6262-6208/ iskcon@harekrishnacanberra.com
Melbourne — 197 Danks St. (mail: P.O. Box 125), Albert Park, VIC 3206/ Tel. +61 (03) 9699-5122/ Fax: +61 (03) 9690-4093/ melbourne@pamho.net
Newcastle — 28 Bull St., Mayfield, NSW 2304/ Tel. +61 (02) 4967-7000/ iskcon_newcastle@yahoo.com.au
Perth — 144 Railway Parade (corner of The Strand) [mail: P.O. Box 102], Bayswater, WA 6053/ Tel. +61 (08) 9370-1552/ Fax: +61 (08) 9272-6636/ perth@pamho.net
Sydney — 180 Falcon St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (mail: P.O. Box 459, Cammeray, NSW 2062)/ Tel. +61 (02) 9959-4558/ Fax: +61 (02) 9957-1893/ info@iskcon.com.au
Sydney — Govinda's Yoga and Meditation Centre, 112 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst NSW 2010 (mail: P.O Box 174, Dings Cross 1340)/ Tel. +61 (02) 9380-5162/ Fax: +61 (02) 9360-1736/ sita@govindas.com.au

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Bambra, VIC (New Nandagram) — 50 Seaches Outlet, off 1265 Winchelsea Deans Marsh Rd., Bambra VIC 3241/ Tel. +61 (03) 5288-7383
Cessnock, NSW (New Gokula) — Lewis Lane (off Mount View Rd., Millfield, near Cessnock [mail: P.O. Box 399, Cessnock, NSW 2325])/ Tel. +61 (02) 4998-1800/ Fax: (Sydney temple)/ iskconfarm@mac.com
Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. +61 (02) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (02) 6672-5498/ ajita@in.com.au

RESTAURANTS

Brisbane — Govinda's, 99 Elizabeth St., 1st floor, QLD 4000/ Tel. +61 (07) 3210-0255
Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Venture St., W. End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net
Cairns — Gaura Nitai's, 55 Spence St., Cairns, QLD/ Tel. +61 (07) 4031-2255 or (0425) 725 901/ Fax: +61 (07) 4031 2256/ gauranitais@in.com.au
Maroochydore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Avenue, QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (07) 5451-0299
Melbourne — Crossways, 1st Floor, 123 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-2939
Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (03) 9650-1578
Newcastle — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 110 King Street, corner of King & Wolf Streets, NSW 2300/ Tel. +61 (02) 4929-6900 / info@govindascafe.com.au
Perth — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 200 William St., Northbridge, WA 6003/ Tel. +61 (08) 9227-1684/ iskconperth@optusnet.com.au

NEW ZEALAND, FIJI, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Auckland, NZ — The Loft, 1st Floor, 103 Beach Road/ Tel. +64 (09) 3797301
Christchurch, NZ — 83 Bealey Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 25-190)/ Tel. +64 (03) 366-5174/ Fax: +64 (03) 366-1965/ iskconchch@clear.net.nz
Hamilton, NZ — 188 Maui St., RD 8, Te Rapa/ Tel. +64 (07) 850-5108/ rmaster@wave.co.nz
Labasa, Fiji — Delailabasa (mail: P.O. Box 133)/ Tel. +679 812912
Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 666 4112/ regprakash@excite.com
Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building 11 Gulam Nadi St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/ Fax: +679 3477436/ vdas@frca.org.fj
Rakiraki, Fiji — Rewasa (mail: P.O. Box 204)/ Tel. +679 694243
Sigatoka, Fiji — Queens Road, Olosara (mail: P.O. Box 1020)/ Tel. +679 6520866 or 6500349/ drgsmarna@connect.com.fj
Suva, Fiji — 166 Brewster St. (mail: P.O. Box 4229)/ Tel. +679 331 8441/ Fax: +679 331 9097/ iskconsuva@connect.com.fj
Wellington, NZ — 105 Newlands Rd., Newlands/ Tel. +64 (04) 478-4108/ iskcon.wellington@paradise.net.nz
Wellington, NZ — Gaura Yoga Centre, 1st Floor, 175 Vivian St. (mail: P.O. Box 6271, Marion Square)/ Tel. +64 (04) 801-5500

RURAL COMMUNITY

Auckland, NZ (New Varshan) — Hwy. 28, Riverhead, next to Huapai Golf Course (mail: R.D. 2, Kumeu)/ Tel. +64 (09) 412-8075/ Fax: +64 (09) 412-7130

RESTAURANTS

Auckland, NZ — Hare Krishna Food for Life, 268 Karangahape Road/ Tel. +64 (09) 300-7585
Labasa, Fiji — Hare Krishna Restaurant, Naseakula Road/ Tel. +679 811364
Lautoka, Fiji — Gopal's, Corner of Yasawa St. and Naviti St./ Tel. +679 662990
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Dolphins FNPF Place, Victoria Parade/ Tel. +679 314154/ vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Opposite University of the South Pacific, Laucala Bay Rd./ Tel. +679 311683/ vdas@govnet.gov.fj
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 18 Pratt St./ Tel. +679 314154
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, 82 Ratu Mara Rd., Samabula/ Tel. +679 386333
Suva, Fiji — Hare Krishna Vegetarian Restaurant, Terry Walk, Cumming St./ Tel. +679 312295

AFRICA

GHANA

Accra — Samsam Rd., Off Accra-Nsawam Hwy., Medie, Accra North (mail: P.O. Box 11686)/ Tel. & fax +233 (021) 229988/ srivas_bts@yahoo.co.in
Kumasi — Twumduasi, near Boadi-Emina, off Kumasi-Accra Road, 3km from Aninwaa Hospital, Emina, Kumasi/ Tel +233 (020) 8320816/ gaurangainkumasi@gmail.com
Nkawkaw — P. O. Box 69
Sunyani — Plot No. 146, South Ridge Estates (mail P.O. Box 685)
Takoradi — New Amanful, P.O. Box 328
Tarkwa — State Housing Estate, Cyanide

RURAL COMMUNITY

Eastern Region — Hare Krishna Farm Community, P.O. Box 15, Old Akrade

CENTERS AROUND THE WORLD

NIGERIA

Abeokuta — Ibadan Rd., Obanatoka (mail: P.O. Box 5177)
Benin City — 108, Lagos-Uselu Rd., Uselu/ Tel. +234 (052) 258636, 08023524924 or 08056283995/ acharyapurandara2000@yahoo.com
Enugu — 5/6, Destiny Layout, Old Abakaliki Rd., Near Enugu Airport, Emene (by Efemelumna Bus Stop)/ Tel. +234 08035822545
Ibadan — 700 meters from Iwo Rd., Ibadan-Lagos Express Way, University of Ibadan (mail: P.O. Box 9996)/ Tel. +234 08034687595/ salika108@hotmail.com
Jos — Gwarandok Rd., Near Air Force Base, Abattoir Rd., by Nammua, Giring Village (mail: P.O. Box 6557)/ Tel. +234 08034711933/ salika108@hotmail.com
Kaduna — Federal Housing Estate, Abuja Rd., Goningora Village (mail: P.O. Box 1121)/ Tel. +234 08035405080/ atreyarishi@yahoo.com
Lagos — 12, Gani Williams Close, off Osolo Way, Ajao Estate, International Airport Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 8793, Marina)/ Tel. +234 (01) 7744926 or 7928906/ bdds.bts@pamho.net
Port Harcourt — Umuebule 11, 2nd tarred road, Etche (mail: P.O. Box 4429, Trans Amadi)/ Tel. +234 08033215096/ canakyaus@yahoo.com
Warri — Okwodiete Village, Kilo 8, Effurun/Orerokpe Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1922)/ Tel. +234 08033451265/ kamalaksa@yahoo.com

SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town — 17 St. Andrews Rd., Rondebosch 7700/ Tel. +27 (021) 6861179/ Fax: +27 (021) 686-8233/ cape.town@pamho.net
◆ **Durban —** 50 Bhaktivedanta Swami Circle, Unit 5 (mail: P.O. Box 56003), Chatsworth, 4030/ Tel. +27 (031) 403-3328/ Fax: +27 (031) 403-4429/ iskcon.durban@pamho.net
Johannesburg — 7971 Capricorn Ave. (entrance on Nirvana Drive East), Ext. 9, Lenasia (mail: P.O. Box 926, Lenasia 1820)/ Tel. +27 (011) 854-1975 or -7969/ iskconjh@iafrica.com
Pretoria — 1189 Church St., Hatfield 0083 (mail: P.O. Box 14077, Hatfield 0028)/ Tel. & fax: +27 (12) 342-6216/ iskconpt@global.co.za

OTHER COUNTRIES

Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire — AICK-CI, 01 B.P. 8366/ Tel. & fax +225 563402
Baie du Cap, Mauritius — St. Martin/ Tel. +230 521-0028
Gaboronne, Botswana — P.O. Box 201003/ Tel. +267 307768/ Fax: +267 301988/ dkkoshal@infow.bw
Kampala, Uganda — 9 Dewington Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 1647), Kampala/ Tel. +256 7564-2741
Kisumu, Kenya — Cairo Rd., P.O. Box 9202/ Tel. +254 (035) 40983/ Fax: +254 (035) 43827
◆ **Lome, Togo —** Sis Face Place Bonke, Cote Blue Night, Tokoin Hospital, 01 BP 3105/ Tel. + 228 2217477 or 9028793/ varaha.bts@pamho.net
Marondera, Zimbabwe — 6 Pine Street (mail: P.O. Box 339)/ Tel. +263 (028) 887-7801
Mombasa, Kenya — Hare Krishna House, Sauti Ya Kenya and Kisumu Rds. (mail: P.O. Box 82224)/ Tel. +254 (011) 312248
Nairobi, Kenya — Muhuroni Close, off West Nagara Rd. (mail: P.O. Box 28946)/ Tel. +254 (0203) 744365/ Fax: +254 (0203) 740957/ iskcon_nairobi@yahoo.com
◆ **Phoenix, Mauritius —** Hare Krishna Land, Pont Fer (mail: P. O. Box 108, Quartre Bornes)/ Tel. +230 696-5804/ Fax: +230 696-8576/ iskcon.hkl@intnet.mu
Rose Belle, Mauritius —Shivala Lane/ Tel. +230 627-5030

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Ghana (Hare Krishna Village) — Gomoa-Swedru, off Wineba-Swedru Highway, Gomua Nyekaudze/ Tel. +233 0277491869 or 0249969922/ hare.krishna.village@bluebottle.com
Mauritius (ISKCON Vedic Farm) — Hare Krishna Rd., Vrindaban/ Tel. +230 418-3185 or 418-3955/ Fax: +230 418-6470
Uganda (Hare Krishna Farm) — Seeta Town, Kampala

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires — Centro Bhaktivedanta, Andonaegui 2054, Villa Urquiza, CP 1431/ Tel. +54 (01) 523-4232/ Fax: +54 (01) 523-8085/ iskcon-ba@gopalnet.com
Rosario — Paraguay 556 (2000)/ Tel. +54 (041) 252630 or 264243/ Fax: +54 (041) 490838
San Miguel — Muqoz 1745, entre Concejal Tribulato y Espaqa, (1663), Pcia. Buenos Aires/ Tel. +54 (011) 4664-6631 or 4667-0483/ bhaktiyoga@sinectis.com.ar

RURAL COMMUNITY

Bhaktilata Puri — Ciudad de la Paz 3554 (1429) Capital Federal/ Tel. & fax: +54 (01) 523-8085

RESTAURANTS

Buenos Aires — Jagannath Prasadam, Triunvirato 4266 (1431)/ Tel. +54 (01) 521-3396
Buenos Aires — Restaurante Tulasi, Marcelo T. de Alvear 628, Local 30

BOLIVIA

Cochabamba — Av. Heroinas E-435 Apt. 3 (mail: P. O. Box 2070)/ Tel. & fax: +591 (042) 54346
Santa Cruz — Calle 27 de Mayo No. 99 esq. Justo Bazan/ Tel. & fax: +591 (03) 345189

RURAL COMMUNITY

Bolivia — (contact ISKCON Cochabamba)

RESTAURANTS

Cochabamba — Restaurant Gopal, calle España N-250 (Galeria Olimpia)/ Tel. +591 (042) 34082
Cochabamba — Restaurant Govinda, calle Mexico #E0303/ Tel. +591 (042) 22568
Cochabamba — Restaurant Tulasi, Av. Heroinas E-262
Oruro — Restaurant Govinda, Calle 6 de Octubre No. 6071
Santa Cruz — Snack Govinda, Calle Bolivar esq. Av. Argomosa (primer anillo)/ Tel. +591 (03) 345189
Sucre — Restaurant Sat Sanga, Calle Tarapacá No. 161/ Tel. +591 (64) 22547

BRAZIL

Belo Horizonte, MG — Rua Ametista, 212, Prado, 30410-420/ Tel. +55 (31) 3337-7645
◆ **Curitiba, PR —** Rua Panamá, Bairro Bacacheri, Curitiba 82510-170/ Tel. +55 (41) 3015-5106/ iskconctba@yahoo.com.br
◆ **Porto Alegre, RS —** Rua Jose Bonifacio, 605, Bom Fim, 90040-130/ Tel. +55 (51) 3332-1704/ iskconportoalegre@midiadeva.net
◆ **Recife, PE —** Rua Bernardo Guimaraes, 114, Boa Vista, 50050-440/ Tel. +55 (32) 214-2021/ nitaygouranga@ig.com.br
Rio de Janeiro, RJ — Rua Vilhena de Morais, 309, Barra da Tijuca, 22793-140/ Tel. +55 (21) 2491-1887/ sergio.carvalho@pobox.com
Salvador, BA — Rua Alvaro Adorno, 17, Brotas, 40255-460/ salvador@iskconbahia.com.br
Sao Paulo, SP — Rua do Paraiso, 694, Paraiso, 04103-000/ Tel. +55 (11) 3263-0975/ comunicacaomandir@grupos.com.br
Suzano, SP — Rua XV, 585, Jardim Gardenia, 08696-550/ Tel. +55 (11) 4752-2553/ info@suzanomandir.com.br

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Caruaru, PE (Nova Vrajadhama) — Serra dos Cavalos, Distrito de Murici, P. O. Box 283, 55000-000/ yagnivi@yahoo.com.br
Parati, RJ (Goura Vrindavana) — P.O. Box 74.862, 23970-000/ Tel. +55 (24) 3371-7364/ goura@paratyweb.com.br
◆ **Pindamonhangaba, SP (Nova Gokula) —** Ribeirao Grande, P.O. Box 1009, 12400-990/ Tel. +55 (12) 3645-8238/ giriraj@ig.com.br
Teresopolis, RJ (Vrajabhumi) — Prata dos Aredes, P. O. Box 92430, 25953-970/ Tel. +55 (21) 2644-7213/ lrvraja@uol.com.br

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANTS

Campina Grande, PB — Govinda, Rua Teodosio de Oliveira Ledo, 144, Centro, 58101-440/ Tel. +55 (83) 342-0239/ mahanm12000@yahoo.com.br
Curitiba, PR — ISKCON Restaurant, R. Paula Gomes, 123, Proximo Shopping Muller, Curitiba 80510-070/ Tel. +55 (41) 3024-5225
Sao Paulo, SP — Gopala Prasada, Rua Antonio Carlos, 413, 01309-011/ Tel. +55 (11) 3283-3867/ gopalaprasada@bol.com.br

MEXICO

◆ **Guadalajara —** Pedro Moreno No. 1791, Sector Juarez, Jalisco, 261278/ Tel. +52 (33) 616-4481
Mexico City — Tiburcio Montiel 45, Colonia San Miguel, Chapultepec D.F., 11850/ Tel. +52 (55) 5273-1953/ Fax: +52 (55) 5272-5944
Monterrey — Juan Ignacio Ramón 841, Col. Barrio Antiguo, entre Dr. Coss y Diego de Montemayor, Zona Centro, Nuevo León, 64000/ Tel. +52 (88) 8340 5950
Monterrey — Playa Revolcadero 3329, Col. Primavera, c.p. 64830/ Tel. +52 (81) 83871883/ ambujaksa.gps@pamho.net
Saltillo — Blvd. Saltillo No. 520, Col. Buenos Aires/ Tel. +52 (844) 417 8752/ ramayana@todito.com

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Guadalajara — (contact ISKCON Guadalajara)
Veracruz — Mail: Jesus Garcia 33, Col. Ferrocarril, Cerro Azul/ libbhkti@mail.internet.com.mx

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

León Guanajuato — Radha Govinda Restaurant, Rusto Sierra 343, Centro, CP 37000/ Tel. +52 (477) 716-2280
Veracruz — Restaurante Radhe, Sur 5 No. 50, Orizaba, Ver./ Tel. +52 (2717) 14825

PERU

Lima — Pasaje Solea 101, Santa Maria-Chosica/ Tel. +51 (511) 360 3381
◆ **Lima —** Schell 634 Miraflores/ Tel. +51 (014) 444-2871
◆ **Lima —** Av. Garcilaso de la Vega 1670/ Tel. +51 (014) 433-2589

RURAL COMMUNITY

Correo De Bella Vista — DPTO De San Martin

ADDITIONAL RESTAURANT

Cuzco — Espaderos 128

OTHER COUNTRIES

Asunción, Paraguay — Centro Bhaktivedanta, Mariano R. Alonso 925/ Tel. +595 (021) 480-266/ Fax: +595 (021) 490-449
Caracas, Venezuela — Av. Los Proceres (con Calle Marquez del Toro), San Bernardino/ Tel. +58 (212) 550-1818
Essequibo Coast, Guyana — New Navadvipa Dham, Mainstay, Essequibo Coast/ Tel. +592 771-4894
Guayaquil, Ecuador — 6 de Marzo 226 and V. M. Rendon/ Tel. +593 (04) 308412 or 309420/ Fax: +564 302108/ gurumani@gu.pro.ec
Panama, Republic of Panama — Via las Cumbres, entrada Villa Zaita, casa #10, frente a INPSA, (mail: P.O. Box 6-1776, El Dorado)/ Tel. +507 231-6561/ iskconpanama@hotmail.com
Paramaribo, Suriname — Kwattaweg #459 (mail: P.O. Box 713)/ Tel. +597 435051/ iskconsur@hotmail.com
Pereira, Colombia — Carrera 5a, No.19-36
San Salvador, El Salvador — Calle Chiltiupan #39, Ciudad Merliot, Nueva San Salvador (mail: A.P. 1506)/ Tel. +503 2278-7613/ Fax: +503 2229-1472/ tulasikrishnadas@yahoo.com
Santiago, Chile — Carrera 330/ Tel. +56 (02) 698-8044/ adikesavadasa@yahoo.com.ar
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic — Calle San Francisco de Asis No. 73, Ensanche Ozama/ Tel. +809 597-5078/ svats1949@hotmail.com
Tegucipalpa, Honduras — (mail: Apartado Postal 30305)/ Tel. +504 32-3172/ Fax. +504 34-780
Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies — Eastern Main Rd., Garden Village, Arouca (mail: B. Narine, Rice Mill Rd., Garden Village, Arouca)/ Tel. +1 (868) 646-1062
Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies — 4 Orion Drive, Debe/ Tel. +1 (868) 647-6809/ iskcondebe@yahoo.com
Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies — Edinburgh Road, Longdenville, Chaguanas/ Tel. +1 (868) 665-2249/ agni.sdg@pamho.net
West Coast Demerara, Guyana — Sri Gaura Nitai Ashirvad Mandir, Lot "B," Nauville Flanders (Crane Old Road), West Coast Demerara/ Tel. +592 254 0494/ iskcon.guyana@yahoo.com
West Coast Demerara, Guyana — New Godruma, 24 Uitvlugt Front, West Coast Demerara
Williamsburg, Guyana — New Kulinagram, Block 6, Williamsburg, Corentyne, Berbice/ Tel. +592 333-3563/ prabhoh@yahoo.com

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Colombia (Nueva Mathura) — Cruzero del Guali, Municipio de Caloto, Valle del Cauca/ Tel. +57 (023) 612688
Costa Rica (Nueva Goloka Vrindavana) — Carretera Cartago-Paraiso, de la iglesia cristiana Rios de Agua Viva, 75 metros al oeste y 300 metros al sudeste, Cartago (mail: Apartado 166, 1002, San Jose)/ Tel. +506 551-0990/ prthvipavana@yahoo.com
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FROM THE EDITOR

Spiritual Bodies

AS A BOY, I attended Boy Scout camp during a couple of summers, and I remember a prank the older boys would play: They'd send younger boys from campsite to campsite asking to borrow a bucket full of steam.

To many people, the term *spiritual body* makes about as much sense as a bucket of steam. The term strikes them as an oxymoron. By definition, they say, "body" means "material body."

A look in the dictionary only confirms their point of view—and confirms that the dictionary's not the best place to look for spiritual guidance. Better to look to the Vedic literature, which does talk about spiritual bodies, using the term *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha:* "a body (*vigraha*) composed of eternity (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*)."

The Vedic literature says that eternity, knowledge, and happiness are the constituents of spirit—what God and the individual souls (*jīvas*) are made of. But that concept may be hard to grasp. How can something be made of eternity? Or knowledge? Or happiness?

A different perspective may help us understand. Instead of bundling together eternity, knowledge, and bliss, we can think of spirit as consciousness itself. The *Upaniṣads* describe the *jīva* as *cit kaṇaḥ,* a particle of consciousness. Because a particle has form, or a body, we can say that the living being is an eternal, blissful body composed of consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary, "The soul is consciousness and conscious."

Both the *jīvas* and the Supreme Soul (God) are *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha.* And while I've spoken of souls as being *composed* of consciousness and *possessing* the qualities of eternity and bliss, it is also correct to say that God and the *jīvas* are in fact composed of all three—eternity, knowledge, and bliss—because on the spiritual plane, unlike the world of our experience, an entity and its qualities are identical.

So we can legitimately speak of spiritual bodies once we understand that something besides matter can constitute bodies. Now, what are the implications, in this world, of our being spiritual entities composed of eternity, knowledge, and bliss? Simply put, we're always striving for those qualities in the material world, which has the opposite nature. The material world and our material bodies are temporary, devoid of sure knowledge, and unhappy.

Our material bodies are not our true self, and material existence is not natural for us. We're spiritual beings who are naturally eternal, fully conscious of the nature of reality, and always abundantly happy. So in this world we strive constantly to achieve our true nature. We want to live forever, have doubtless knowledge, and always be happy. But our material bodies and the material world don't cooperate.

The philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the practices of *bhakti-yoga* allow us to regain our true, spiritual nature and spiritual bodies. In the Vedic literature, especially in books such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* we hear about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with His devotees in the spiritual world. Vaiṣṇavas, who understand the concept of spiritual bodies, know that these activities are not mythological or metaphorical; they're exchanges of love between spiritual beings (God and the individual souls) in spiritual bodies of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. These spiritual activities performed with spiritual bodies are not imaginary, like buckets of steam, but are the purest objects of meditation and praise.

—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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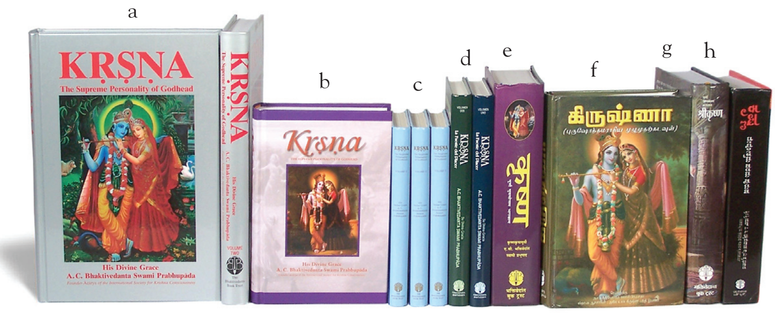

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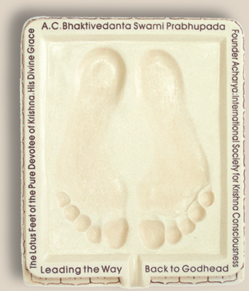

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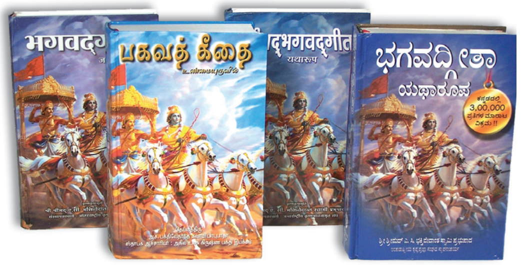

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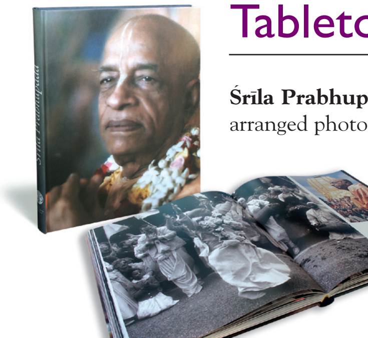

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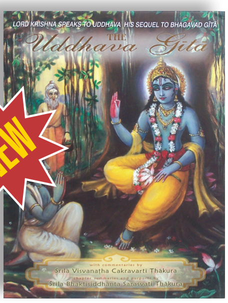
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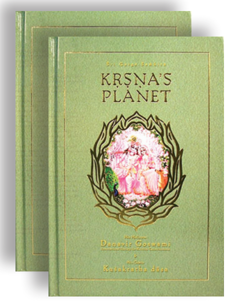
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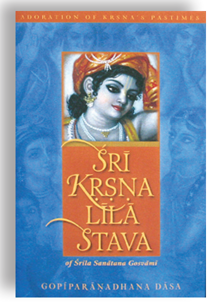
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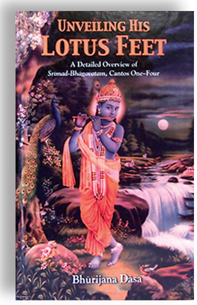
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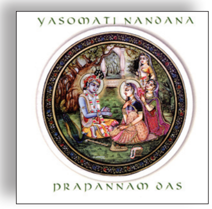
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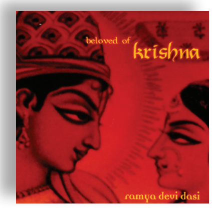
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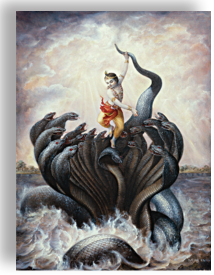

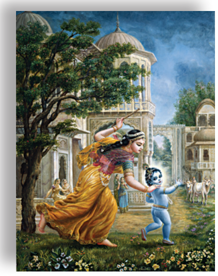

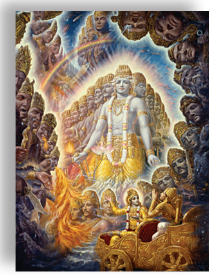

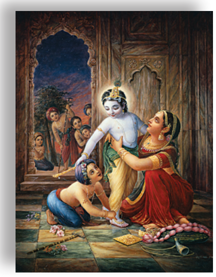

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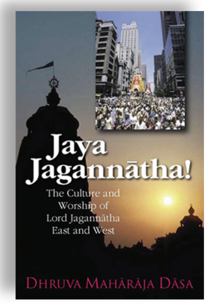

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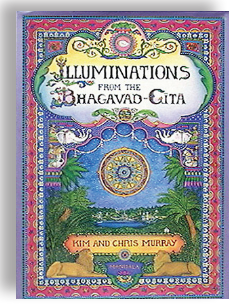

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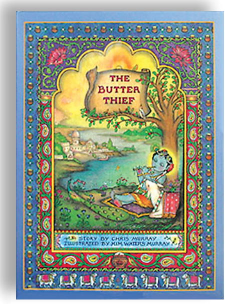

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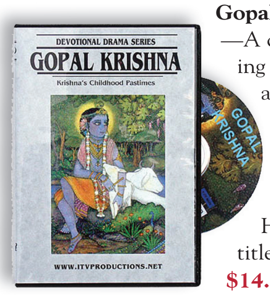

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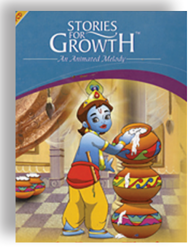

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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.3.17, Purport

O son of Pṛthā, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 9.13

By executing regulated devotional service one is elevated onto the transcendental stage, beyond the material modes of nature. At that time one's heart becomes illuminated like the sun.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.3.1

We live in the Kali-yuga. This is an age of strife. So it happens that the self-luminous path of pure devotion is completely covered by millions of thorns in the shape of foolish arguments and wordy wranglings. In these circumstances it is absolutely impossible to have knowledge of pure devotion without the mercy of Caitanya Candra. Śrī Caitanya Candra is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is the Godhead.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Lecture in Vṛndāvana (22 Kārttika, 1928)

Only a rare person who has adopted complete, unalloyed devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can uproot the weeds of sinful actions with no possibility that they will revive. He can do this simply by discharging devotional service, just as the sun can immediately dissipate fog by its rays.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.15

A sage who understands the Supreme, the life of all that lives, will not speak of anyone but Him. Such a sage has fallen in love with the Supreme Lord. He is eager to hear of the Lord's pastimes. He actively serves the Lord. Such a sage is the best of all transcendentalists.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.4

The Supreme Lord is not attained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, nor even by much hearing. He is attained only by one whom He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own form.

Katha Upaniṣad 1.2.23

Festival Of India 2008

Schedule for North America

July 4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā
July 12–13: Montreal Rathayātrā
July 19–20: Toronto Rathayātrā
July 27: San Francisco Rathayātrā
August 3: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
August 9–10: Vancouver Rathayātrā
August 23–24: Vancouver Janmāṣṭamī & Vyāsa Pūjā
August 30–31: Edmonton Rathayātrā
September 6: Calgary Rathayātrā
September 13: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
October 11: Washington, D.C., Rāma Vijayotsava

IMPORTANT NOTE: Some of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival dates with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival of India: madhuhadasa@gmail.com.